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LETTERS FROM FRANCE & ITALY



ARTHUR GUTHRIE

1. Paris — Descr., 1900 —

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**THE ROWLEY LETTERS FROM FRANCE
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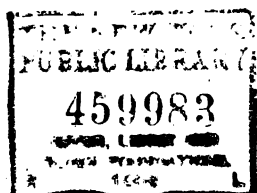
LETTERS FROM FRANCE & ITALY

BY
ARTHUR GUTHRIE
"ANTHONY ROWLEY"



CHICAGO
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I

FIRTH OF CLYDE,
September 1906.

THIS week we say good-bye to the familiar outlook from the study window, to the foreground of tall 'trees, the widening firth, and the far-away hills of the west. We have suddenly become large employers of leisure, and propose to embark upon a fresh venture; to travel south with the sun; to take our whimseys, and our walks abroad. Our work will be play; the new business is to be a long

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holiday. The thing has been done before ; but hitherto, it has been other people's luck : this time it is ours.

When ingenuous youth first mounts the office stool, the severest blow to his pride of place is the reduction of his summer holiday from two months or more to ten days or less. After many years, when he rises to a silk hat, or the senior clerkship, the annual holiday may be extended to fourteen days ; on great occasions, such as the year of his nuptials and honeymoon, it may even stretch out to three weeks ; but this is toiling mankind's greatest expectation—thus far may he go but no farther. Mine has been the common lot during a painfully protracted business career. Now, by the gift of the gods, and the luck of a life-time, there is spreading out before us a holiday of six months. Think of it ! I nudge myself with glee as I reduce the sum to its component parts : twenty-six weeks, or one

hundred and eighty-two days, or four thousand, three hundred and sixty-eight hours of happy escapade! What shall we make of all this?

Ah! if such a chance had come years ago in the golden age of the office-boy and the junior clerk, how they would have sounded the loud timbrel! As the great day of exodus drew nearer and nearer, they would have been going about town treading on air; and for their mid-day meals, feeding on honey-dew, and drinking the milk of Paradise. I who have followed them, in straight descent, accept the big adventure calmly; there are no boisterous anticipations; and yet, if I cannot quite

“recapture

The first fine careless rapture,”

I hope sometimes to raise the stirring ghosts of these old youngsters, and please God, the three of us may foregather again, and hold high wassail together.

If we had our choice of the perfect holiday,

we would take again the long tramp of youth ;
but Father Time blocades that path. These
ideal excursions are now but holidays of dream.
With Lavengro we still may stroll and hear him
say : " Life is sweet brother. . . . There's
day and night, brother, both sweet things ;
sun, moon, and stars, all sweet things ; there's
likewise a wind on the heath." In waking
dream we may yet travel through the Cevennes,
exulting with Louis under his wide and open
sky :

"The bed was made, the room was fit,
By punctual eve the stars were lit ;
The air was still, the water ran ;
No need there was for maid or man,
When we put up, my ass and I
At God's green caravanserai."

Or, we may tramp in spirit with Hilaire Belloc
from France to Italy :

"Across the valleys and the high-land,
With all the world on either hand,
Drinking when I had a mind to,
Singing when I felt inclined to ;

Nor ever turned my face to home
Till I had slaked my heart in Rome."

That was a Rome of dream; but in the winter before us we may reach the city of seven hills. We shall have to trust, however, to the prosaic trains; no longer for us the "hilarious path" of youth. Young men! young men! shoulder ye knap-sacks while ye may, old Time is still a-flying!

"Out of yourself, and your country you go," is the charm of such an adventure. In familiar London, and even in Paris, we may feel at home; but in the eternal city we shall not know ourselves at all; old, old Rome will be so strange and new. I ought to have the immortal Gibbon for my guide, but for years a tell-tale book-mark has rested in his middle volume. It is my great loss: the gentle Baedeker will have to serve. Meantime, Rome lies three months, and a thousand miles away, and much may happen ere we traverse that space and

time. A decline and fall of the credit balance, for example, may affect the distance and duration of our journey. We are of good hope; we are packing our boxes; and have our tickets taken for London and Paris—both on the straight high way to Rome.

We are provided with an imposing passport from a high official of the crown who has so many handles to his name that he must perforce employ the first person plural. "We request and require," he says, "in the Name of His Majesty, all whom it may concern to allow Anthony Rowley, a British subject, accompanied by Mona, his wife, to pass freely without let or hindrance, and to afford them every protection of which they may stand in need." I shall carry that in my breast-pocket, as I might a revolver, and have it handy to present full cock-a-hoop at the heads of all whom it may concern who dare to hinder us. By Hamlet! I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!

We are also carrying certificates of respectability in the form of two large compressed cane boxes. These, I believe, give one the entrée to good hotels and six days credit ; and also secure the faithful adherence of porters and cabmen. As we are to be absent for six months, we are taking what will suffice for two years : that is my point of view in the daily debate, but then, you know what men are ! A man will recall his adventurous youth, when he purchased his first hand-bag and gloried in its abysmal capacity. The self-sufficiency of that primal bag takes possession of man, and colours his whole after-life. With woman it is different ; she is born with the box, the basket, and the hold-all in her blood ; and rejoices in their increase and multiplication.

There be many ways of going about the important act of packing. My friend Macronie's method is to do everything himself ;

he prepares a list of the soft goods and the hardware he wants; and ticks off each article as he bags it. My much more skilful way is to leave it all to Mona. Our work is nearing completion; I have only to sit on the two big boxes, and affix red labels with the plain device:

“ROWLEY, PASSENGER TO PARIS.”



ST GERMAIN DES PRÉS

II

PARIS,
October 1906.

THERE is a witty saying of Douglas Jerrold's to the effect that the best thing he knew be-

tween France and England, was the sea. Two inferences may be drawn from that remark ; one is that Jerrold lived before the days of *l'entente cordiale*, and the other, that he had seldom crossed the narrow streak in dirty

weather. If Jerrold had lived to cross the channel on the day we did, he would have spoken a kindlier word for France, and less respectfully of the sea. There is not much the matter with France; once our staggering feet were planted there, it felt quite as stable as England.

Now we are in Paris again, but this time not as tourists bent upon seeing the sights in a week: we are settling down with some months before us for quiet investigation. It has been enough for the first few days to acquire the art of opening and fastening the windows of our rooms, to comprehend the mysteries of the make-believe cabinets and couches that turn out to be beds and dressing-tables, and to spy the open windows of our neighbours, for furtive glimpses of French life and character. We are renewing the Parisian days of our youth; we have put a few francs in the slot, and the figures begin to perform.

At 8 A.M. there is a knock at our bedroom door, and we boldly respond with the word which signifieth "Come in." Thereupon enters Josephine with the identical coffee and rolls of quarter of a century ago ; the same honey, and the old oblong blocks of sugar which used to lure us on to dominoes. We do not dress for this meal, we breakfast in free and easy garb ; we are Bohemians once more, and Monagaily addresses me as *Antoine*.

It is the second week of October, but still as warm as our northern June. From our open windows we see the swallows careering round our garden court, and encircling the ancient spire of *St. Germain des Prés*. We go out and dawdle in the direction of the Luxembourg ; it is a lingering business, for the *rue de Seine* is one long cajolery of book-shops and print-shops, and store upon store of curiosities. We intended having a look at the Luxembourg collection to see how it now compares with the

extended Tate Gallery, but we have to pass the door of the famous *Musée*. How could we have entered? The day is a school half-holiday, and the gardens are gay with flowers, and swarming with children; and most of the boys are bare-legged Allisters, and all the girls are tartan'd Winsomes. The Degas, the Manets, and the Monets can wait; meanwhile, we must watch the living pictures at their play. Croquet appears to be the serious business of men who labour at it upon a stretch of uneven hard-caked earth; but the rest of the garden is given over to children's games, to gentle tennis, hand-ball, and football; and to the most subtle and cunning of all which has been well-named *Diabolo*. But in vain one looks for displays of heroic struggle, or of impetuous temper: all the games are amazing, cherubic exhibitions of good behaviour. The children are the dearest possible little players—I had almost said playthings.

We return to our rooms to find we have to

draw back the venetian shutters to shield us from a blazing sun. Our rooms are on the third floor of an old house of the common Parisian type, of which we have no copies at home. It has its large heavy gate and street door in one ; its paved court and watchful *concierge* ; and two flights of stairs leading to six or seven floors or *appartements*. The Madame with whom we board rents the first and third floors, and appears to have the control of extra rooms in the upper regions and even beyond the precincts. We are among the first of her winter *pensionnaires*, and are enjoying the tiny flutter of each new arrival. The student element prevails. We have exchanged civilities with Jules and Alphonse, both unutterably French, who spend their forenoons and afternoons in the life-classes of the *Beaux Arts*. They rarely have their meals at our common table : I suppose they have to study the simple life in more ways than one, and have to content

themselves frequently with the loaf of bread, the jug of wine, and Jeannette, or Babette, as the case may be, beside them in the *cabaret*. We have been able to welcome in our own tongue three girl students ; Clare, an Irish girl who for hours keeps pounding away at the phrases of Grieg and Chopin ; and two equally bright Americans, Blanche and Alta, the one a Student of French Literature at the *Sorbonne*, and the other rippling over with voice production exercises, and the cream of American slang.

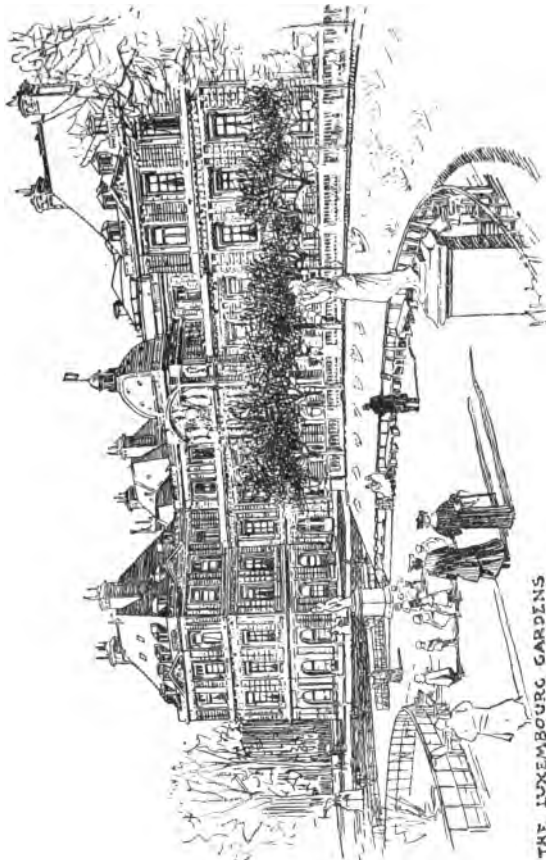
I have been writing home to my small niece Winsome (aged 8) telling her of our new friends, and also that we have gone back to school for two hours daily, and are now under the correction of a French governess. Although we are old enough to be her father and mother, Mademoiselle Marie is exceedingly strict with us. Even on Saturdays, we have to say our lesson, which I consider a downright shame.

Winsome sympathises, but reminds us that her governess enforces the morning cold bath, and makes her practise scales before breakfast. Well, ours has not gone so far as that, but she often throws a wet blanket over me when I persist in calling a table "him," and a bedstead "her." I desire to threaten Mademoiselle that I shall be driven to play truant soon, but I cannot express myself; I cannot find the French word for the doric irregular verb "to plunk." My pronunciation improves, they tell me; I can almost say *trop* like a Frenchman. I go for it with a guttural note brought up from the heels of my boots: Mademoiselle says that the correct pronunciation of *trop* is the crucial test of a good accent.

How delightful it would be if only the French accent and idioms arrived with the appealing force of the American slang which occasionally drops from Alta, to the mystification of Mademoiselle. At dinner to-day Alta referred

to an extremely fat and puffy *bonne* we had met, as "an old freak with bunny cheeks flapping in the breeze," then calmly requested our Governess to translate the expression !

We are making little excursions while the sun shines, but experience is teaching us the wisdom of spending Sunday as our day of rest and church-going. In Paris, the Sunday closing movement has taken great strides, with the result, that on that day, the steamers and tramcars are uncomfortably crowded, in spite of the doubling of the fares. We went down the river to *St. Cloud* last Sunday and had to stand all the way packed in a crowd. Still, it was worth that fatiguing hour on the steamer to see the flowers and the people, the avenues in their autumn glory, and the famous view of Paris from the terrace. We had never before seen the beautiful park with the trees in golden red and yellow. Since then, we have taken two more (week-day) river trips: they are a



THE LUXEMBOURG GARDENS

B

great delight ; and if you go all the way to *St. Cloud*, the cost is less than twopence an hour. By the river-side scores of washerwomen scrub all day long, or break shirt buttons with a wooden club. There are also troops of men—the lords of the washerwomen, most likely—who line the banks with their fishing tackle, and await most patiently the slightest evidence of the unseen. On one of our voyages we had the good fortune to witness an exciting incident. A fisherman landed one tiny little fish ; it is a rare occurrence ; we may never see the like again.

We are making up arrears of church-going ; I do not refer to the pagan custom of wandering over the edifice guide-book in hand, gazing at the jewelled glass, the carving of the choir-stalls, and dodging the solicitous sacristan ; I speak of going to church in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Every other evening there are letters to be posted, or tobacco to be

bought; and just round the corner from the post office—which is also the tobacconist's—stands the most ancient, and to many the most interesting church in Paris, that of *St. Germain des Prés*. One or two men, and a fair stream of women and children trickle into vespers, and I often go with the stream. If it were a Quaker's meeting, or a Jewish Synagogue I hope I would be courteous enough to conform to their rule and keep on my hat; but being *St. Germain des Prés* I try to discover the Catholic rules and regulations and to follow them. Fortunately, the church is dimly lit, and my bungling efforts attract no notice. My model is a blue-bloused workman whose simple devotional air is impressive, and I endeavour to do as he does. Together we stand, we bow, we kneel, we make the sign of the cross. We are stilled by the organ music, and moved by the children's voices singing the French of a hymn.

I have been to church ; but I wonder what my covenanting forebears would have said, had they seen me ; or the lady collectors at home who extract my reluctant half-crowns in aid of the Protestant Mission in France.



THE SEINE

III

PARIS, *October 1906.*

WE have been having a little rain—gentle French rain—but not enough yet to induce home-sickness, and hurry us back to our mountains and floods. We are surprised ourselves at feeling so much at home in Paris. We move about easily, and have had no trouble in mastering the general “hang” or lie of the city. I attribute this, in a great measure, to the good sense of the river Seine in flowing

westward to the sea. Our own home river, the Clyde, follows this course, and so we rapidly take our bearings, marking the Paris street, or park, or district, by its nearest counterpart in our native city. We have visited London ten times for every sojourn in Paris, and yet London has always been, and still remains a labyrinth, a maze. It is the Thames that confuses us ; it persists in flowing in the wrong direction, disturbing every point of our compass. Here in Paris, there is no such muddle ; *l'entente cordiale* exists between Seine and Clyde ; the rivers understand each other, and have a tryst to meet somewhere in the broad Atlantic.

We live on the south side of the river, in the homely district known as *The Quarter*. There be many quarters in Paris—more than fractions allow — but this one alone is *The Quarter*, the Latin Quarter of song and story. Here are the Universities and the Art Schools ; and here, from all the quarters of the globe,

young men and maidens gather; to sit at the feet of all sorts of masters, and "to follow the gleam." The *Sorbonne* Lectures and Classes do not begin for a week or two yet; but most of the Art students are back to their work—and to their play. A group of these boys in their working overalls swooped down our street yesterday, with their faces decorated as for the war-path in traditional Red Indian style. Their appearance would have blocked the traffic at home, but no serious attention was paid to them here. It was just their fun; and probably considered less eccentric than it would be in Scotland for a divinity student to dispense with his waistcoat, and sport a cummerbund. Jules by way of a joke decorated the face of Alphonse and dared him to go forth to *déjeuner* with this embellishment. Alphonse has no objections, he thinks the colour scheme is charming; and immediately, the *Tom Sawyer* law is in operation, and all the boys are ashamed

of their colourless cheeks, and decline to appear conspicuous beside Alphonse. The thing is done; and in a day or two they will invent, and indulge in some other mild pleasantry.

These little follies of the students of the Latin Quarter are characteristic of the temperament of the Latin nations. The students are frequently at this game; but several times in the course of the year, not only the boys, but their parents as well—all Paris, in fact—give the reins to innocent frivolity, and enjoy the merriest, maddest days. To the solemn visitors from the North who at church doors, have stood behind the plate, but who have never crossed the door of a theatre, this display of puerility, this awful descent into childishness, is the most astounding sight of their lives: it goes altogether beyond their comprehension. Nevertheless, thank God, there is a remnant, a chosen people in the North who do frequently unbend in the privacy of the congenial circle,

and become as daft as *mardi-gras* Frenchmen, to the healing and uplifting of mind and spirit.

The American, in this respect, has more abandon than the Briton, and comes nearer the Latin temperament. America is still a child among the nations, and its people, on an occasion, are not ashamed to "carry on" like children—or at least like boys—for the pure fun of the thing. Alta tells us of an instance which has come to her knowledge in a letter from her own folk. A comic opera struck the town in spring, and one of these nonsensical "tags" or phrases, which such works usually contain, struck the people with irresistible force. The phrase was "Skiddoo, 23 for yours." What that means on the face of it, no man can tell, but it soon began to mean a great deal to the citizens of Minneapolis. When friends met and parted, the one and only correct form of salutation became "Skiddoo, 23 for yours." The craze caught on at the

principal hotel, and the office-boy there, who was No. 23, was christened "Skiddoo," and everyone called for him so. Then it occurred to a born leader of mankind that the 23rd of this month of comic opera must of necessity be "Skiddoo Day." Men of the Office and the Store grinned; the whole town took it up; notices were printed and exhibited in many windows that "This Store will be closed on Skiddoo Day"; and when the day arrived employers allowed their clerks to "Skiddoo." Possibly in no other country in the world could such a piece of "micarekish" daftness have taken place, and been continued for a month. The phenomenon speaks well for the sound common-sense of Alta's countrymen.

Doubtless Jules and Alphonse, as they go to roost in their utmost attic, have their long, long thoughts, their dreams of fame and a picture in the Luxembourg. Meanwhile they are only in the students' quarter. There is an

omnibus that runs from the *Place St. Michel*, which for three sous will carry Jules to the *Place Pigalle*—to the very chairs in which Degas and Manet sat with George Moore discussing Art, and Art again, and once more Art, until the dawn appeared, and the drowsy waiters cleared the tables and put up the shutters. Ah! what omnibus, and what price to carry him where Manet and Degas are securely seated now!

To-day, I, too, drank a bock at the *Nouvelle Athènes*, across the way from the *Rat Mort* in the *Place Pigalle*, sitting where these men often sat, and recalling the time when George Moore himself was playing the part of Jules. "Ah!" he writes in his confessions, "the morning idlenesses and long evenings when life was but a summer illusion, the grey moonlights on the *Place* where we used to stand on the pavements, the shutters clanging up behind us, loth to separate, thinking of what we had

left said, and how much better we might have enforced our arguments. Dead and scattered are all those who used to assemble there, and those years and our home, for it was our home, live only in a few pictures and a few pages of prose. The same old story, the vanquished only are victorious, and though unacknowledged, though unknown, the influence of the *Nouvelle Athènes* is inveterate in the artistic thought of the nineteenth century."



IV

PARIS, *November* 1906.

A SCOTTISH November has arrived in Paris, and we are having a touch of the cold and wet of winter ; our street, the *rue de Seine*, is almost a tributary stream ; but

“ It ain’t no use to grumble and complain :
It’s jest as cheap and easy to rejoice ;
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
W’y, rain’s my choice.”

With our incredible command of leisure, we

can afford a day in the house, and enjoy it. We have been mercifully preserved from the French Salamander, and the American Stove, and rejoice over a bright wood fire in our little sitting-room. It is famous: it is even finer than that—it is homelike and homely. From rooms around, above, and beneath us come the sounds of instruments in diligent practice; we do not complain: it is a pleasure to listen to exercising so skilfully done. In the overhead room, a violinist is performing some amazing tricks. He takes a scale and slowly fiddles it up, and carefully draws it down again; he then makes a dash at it *pianissimo*, and at a furious pace ripples it over and over again, his soft notes purling like a flute. If we should weary of the sound of him, we have only to step into the adjoining room, and hearken to the sounds of her—to the deep bugle calls from Alta's natural organ, getting her low G "free from wiggle"; or to the strains of Clare at the

piano, ding-donging away for the mastery of one little phrase.

We have many opportunities of hearing the finished performance that follows the industrious practice of music. Less than a stone's throw from Madame's house there are the *Concerts Rouges*, now in their eighteenth year of existence, where for eighteenpence you can have a mouthful of drink, and an excellent earful of music from an admirable little orchestra. We frequently drop in there ; and have only to close our eyes and listen, and lo, we are back at our own home subscription concerts, and to our familiar seats in the north-west corner of the gallery. We are not conscious of any foreign accent to the *Leonora* overture, or to the *Invitation to the Valse* ; and towards the end of Weber's *Invitation* we are amused to find the awkward burst of applause breaking forth at the wrong moment. The French audience falls into the *Valse finale* trap, recollects, and looks foolish,

exactly as we do at home. One touch of Weber makes the whole world kin. For a shilling only, at these Concerts you can have a drink, and a seat behind the orchestra at the back of the hall. In this retired spot you do not hear so well, but you sit among a more picturesque crowd ; men of the downy chin, the velvet jacket, and the flabby neck-tie, who are accompanied by variegated ladies of their own denomination or persuasion. The gain to the eye makes amends for the loss to the ear ; the drinks are identical, coffee white and coffee black served in tumblers ; and for the reckless devil-me-care, a small cherry brandy. These gatherings, by the way, are smoking concerts, where men, if they so desire it, may smoke along with the ladies of Bohemia. It is a queer country :

“The latitude’s rather uncertain ;
The longitude also is vague ;
But the people I pity, who know not the city
The beautiful city of Prague.”

An offset to these dull November days has been the flying visit of a niece from Scotland on her way to the Riviera, who has two days only to spend in Paris. Paris for the first time, and only two short days:—what shall be done to the owner of this? Had this girl been American, each day she would have done a round and a half of the clock, and gone off with all Paris at her finger-ends, and on her feet the dandiest clock stockings you never saw; while I, her guide—well, the bulletins would report that I passed a restless night, and that there was little hope of my recovery. In the two days of our actual sight-seeing, I took care to show the three things one must not fail to see in Paris. We took the long drive from the *Gare de Lyon* to the *Madeleine*; probably the most impressive sight that Paris has for the stranger. It takes him through the *Place de la Bastille*, and the *Place de la République*; past the *Portes St. Martin* and *St. Denis*; and then by the wide

and worldly Boulevards right on to the church of St. Mary Magdalen. Whosoever travels this way receives the most vivid impression of the Paris that is, and the Paris that has been—an impression that will remain as long as life shall last. So, too, with the second show. We entered the Louvre Museum by the main door where fat *Cochers* browse and sun themselves; and guides address you in English. We passed along the *Denon* sculpture gallery, ascended the first short flight of the main stair-case, and turned to the left. "Then felt we like some watchers of the skies"—there, far away at the extreme end of the vista, the radiant form of the one and only Venus of Milo saluted us, compelling the girl to quote from Keats, and to call me "Cortez"—"stout Cortez," I believe she said. However, I did not mind: I was in excellent company, and drew my niece's attention to the ample circumference of the perfect woman; and hinted that we need to revise our

conceptions of the ideal length, breadth, and thickness of the human form.

In the third place, and in conclusion, we passed from the gloom of *Notre Dame* into the glory of the *Sainte-Chapelle*. What the interior of the *Sainte-Chapelle* looks like on a bright sunny forenoon, is beyond my power of expression. Would that John Keats had stepped in to help us again as he did with the Venus of Milo. Was Keats ever in Paris? And if he was, is there not a lost sonnet somewhere, "On first looking into *La Sainte-Chapelle*"? Ah! well, he knew the colour and the glamour of these windows: he must have seen them often in his dreams. I begin to feel more sure and certain of this: it was these he took for the

"Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas."

And it was a bit from the rose-window that he set into the casement of sweet *Madeline's* chamber, to throw "warm gules" on her fair

breast. O, yes, the soul of Keats has been here; he has described for me these very windows in *The Eve of St. Agnes* — the windows

“Diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth’s deep damasked wings;
And in the midst ’mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens
and kings.”



V

PARIS, *November 1906.*

IT is hard to believe it, but we are already into our second month of Parisian life ; our days go twinkling past like the recording seconds of the little handless watches of the cheap jeweller. Of all the many inventions for the measurement of time, these abruptly changing markers are the most fascinating—

and diabolical : I would like to smash them to smithereens. Surely we have been well enough served by the slow and leisurely movements of the hour and minute hands. If men were wise they would return to the sand-glass of their ancestors, which ran for an hour, and then rested ; or even to the extinct clepsydra, which I may tell you—to save you from the dictionary, where I myself had to search for it—is not an antedeluvian monster, but an ingenious water-clock. Best of all would be the sun-dial, the ideal recorder of the fleeting golden hours ; the difficulty in our country is to get the sun to attend to the dial.

For years, I have had the mild longing to possess an old hour-glass. Macronie has one at home, a beauty ; and he says he will leave it to me in his will ; but meanwhile he lives a sober life, golfs twice a week, and is careful to change his wet garments. Along the *Quais*, and in all sorts of old curiosity shops, I search

and search for my own hour-glass, but so far all in vain. There are many quaint old watches to be had, egg and turnip-shaped, but never the simple sand measure. The latest model of the watch has gone to an extreme thinness; exposed side-ways in the windows of the swell shops, it is difficult to see one. How such wafer-like watches can be made to contain real wheels that go round is a mystery. Alta says she "wouldn't trust 'em for time no more 'n a rabbit"; and pins her faith on the chesty *Waltham*.

I returned weary of the chase of the sand-glass to find rest and refreshment from Maurice Maeterlinck. In "The Measure of the Hours," he makes his readers partakers of his own fine gift of reverie; under his spell time ceases to be; the golden gates of leisure are thrown open.

"It is fitting," he says, regarding the measuring of time, "that our working months and

winter days, days of bustle, business, hurry, and restlessness, should be strictly, methodically, harshly divided and registered by the metal wheels and hands and the enamelled faces of our chimney-clocks, our electric or pneumatic dial-plates, or our small pocket-watches."

"On the other hand, for our no longer indifferent, but mostly sombre hours, for our hours of discouragement, of self-denial, of sickness and pain, for the dead minutes of our life, let us regret the time-honoured, dejected, and silent hour-glass of our ancestors."

Then Maeterlinck lifts up his voice and celebrates the sun-dial. "By this immediate, this only authentic transcription of the wishes of time which direct the stars, our poor human hour, which rules our meals and the little actions of our little lives, acquires a nobility, a direct and urgent fragrance of infinity, that renders vaster and more health-giving the

dazzling dewy mornings and almost motionless afternoons of the fair and immaculate summer."

Alas! my garden at home has a northern exposure, and to place a sun-dial there might appear an act of folly, almost of derangement; and yet, if I could only think that it might help me to attain to the mind and spirit of Maeterlinck, the specifications for its erection would be issued as soon as we return.

The month and more of Paris has produced a slight—a very slight—improvement in my schoolboy French, and a few new words have been added to my vocabulary. I now know what a *bouquiniste* is, and what it means to *bouquiner*. The keepers of the old book-stalls on the *Quais* are the *bouquinistes*; and I, when I go on the prowl, and loiter along from box to box, dipping into this book and that, I practise the verb to *bouquiner*. It is not a bad plan to begin firing off your first French phrases in the open; should the return

fire of the *bouquiniste* get too hot for you, you can say "Yes! yes!" and flee to the cover of the next stall. But now we are venturing upon more desperate enterprises, and boldly besieging shops where no English is spoken; deeds undreamt of in October. I am saving up the necessary courage and phraseology for getting my hair cut one of these days. My plans are being laid to storm the Frenchiest looking barber's shop in the *Quarter*; and, if after all my trouble, the *coiffeur* dares to speak a word of English to me—I shall erase him, wipe him off the face of the earth.

A week ago, we were commissioned by a friend to buy a French medicine, and to post it home. My interview with the druggist endured for twenty minutes, while his shop-boy was discovering for us the postal rates to Scotland.

"Are you then of the Scottish?" the *phar-*

macien asked, and I admitted that I was of them.

"Then you will also be Celt," he added; and I tried to say that I was a little, a very little of the Celt, but not much.

"I am Breton," he said; "we are of the same blood." I raised my hat to my kinsman, and began to think that in the matter of the postage he might not swindle me after all; a kind of free-masonry was at work.

Presently he did a much worse thing: he began to test me in the "Celtic" tongue. He gave me to understand that the Bretons possessed a language which was quite different from French, and he was wondering if the speech of the Celts of Scotland, resembled that of the Breton Celts.

"O, yes," I said, "I can speak a very little Gaelic." By way of demonstration, I proceeded to inquire, in the well-known Gaelic phrase, how he comported himself, a phrase which

everyone will remember, is troublesome to spell.

No, he could discover no resemblance to his native tongue in that phrase.

I next dazzled him with the chorus lines of the love song which every Highland servant girl has sung to Lowland children ; but I took care to recite them as if they were passages from Shakespeare, or Ossian, or the real Fiona. He was much impressed, but still unenlightened ; while I was beginning to feel in rare fettle with my explanatory French as well my wealth of Gaelic. Then, and most unexpectedly, he came to close grips, requesting me to repeat very slowly and carefully the " Celtic " words for " six pence."

For the moment I felt completely caught ; and yet how ridiculous it would be to succumb to so simple a matter as " sixpence " on the top of my glib volubility. It is a fine point to determine whether I really rose, or fell to the

occasion. I had some faint recollection of counting in Gaelic, and making a supreme effort, I gave him what I considered, and do still consider to be very passable "Celtic" for "sixpence." I am far from asserting that it was the purest possible classical Gaelic, but it served to interest my friend the *pharmacien*, who, I feel certain, did not overcharge me for postage. There was 50 *centimes* for the stamp, and 10 *centimes* for the packing ; and at that, I began to see the innocent workings of his mind which had posed me with sixpence—and a small problem in casuistry.



VI

PARIS, *November* 1906.

MONA and I have never been keen playgoers: music has charmed us more. For me, the play would often be the thing, but for the late hours and the morning headache. But the headaches are forgotten when we recall the great nights when the stars of the first magnitude shone. It has been our good fortune

to have seen the *Tony Lumpkin* of old Buckstone, Joseph Jefferson as *Rip Van Winkle*, Edwin Booth and Henry Irving playing together as *Iago* and *Othello* ; Salvini, the greatest *Othello* of all ; and three of the fairest *Rosalinds*, Mary Anderson, Ellen Terry, and Madame Modjeska. To this constellation we are now pleased to add the great French comedian M. Coquelin. We have seen him play the *Tartuffe* of Molière, and also the part of *Mascarille* in *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. We booked seats at the *Théâtre de la Gaîté* for an afternoon performance, but on climbing to them we found we were perched on a narrow ledge, and beneath us a frightful abyss. We drew back in time, a tragedy was averted ; and descending from the giddy height, paid five francs more to hear Coquelin in comfort and safety. We did not understand his every word, and yet there was no mistaking his meaning, his actions and gestures were so ex-

pressive. His make-up as the sanctimonious hypocrite *Tartuffe* was uncomfortably like a Scottish Presbyterian minister; indeed, his figure and facial expressions were constantly suggesting two blameless divines of our own acquaintance, whom heaven preserve from witnessing the *Tartuffe* of Coquelin.

But no man, not even Coquelin, can make a pleasing show of hypocrisy; and so we were glad to be done with *Tartuffe*, and to enjoy the merriment of *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. In the hypocrite play, the applause was led by the mechanical *claque*; but in this one, Coquelin himself kept us on the constant chuckle, or sent us into fits of laughter. I have been wondering what the gentlemen of the *claque* make of such occasions when their work is literally taken out of their hands. Do they cherish a grudge against the popular actor; or do they rejoice with him, and simply withdraw for a drink?

On the first days of the week we religiously attend orchestral concerts, the finest we have ever heard. M. Colonne's band happened to get the first hearing, and Mona pronounced it perfect; but after listening to the *Lamoureux* orchestra conducted by M. Camille Chevillard, she found herself bankrupt in expression. Colonne conducts with dignity and a baton; Chevillard with fire and his whole anatomy. The perfect and the pluperfect must describe them. We have been listening to all kinds of music, from the oldest classics, to the piping hot modern. I have been charmed to breathlessness by the familiar Pastoral symphony, rapt in my own visions of its peacefulness. I believe I understand what Beethoven intended by his imitation of the shepherd's pipes, the chirping of birds, and the cry of the cuckoo; but modern programme music is beyond me. There are modern composers who demand that we stifle the excellent and most personal gift

D

of reverie, virtually claiming that imagination belongs to them alone. They will condescend by verbal notes to direct an audience to the full, true, and particular meaning of their vagaries. Confound their impudence! We have just been suffering from one of the latest freaks of programme music, *Istar*, a set of variations by Vincent D'Indy. In this *opus*, the composer desires us to follow his description (given only orchestrally, of course) of the *Lady Istar* having her clothes taken off in seven movements. The composition begins with a theme highly frilled and furbelowed; and ends with it being played in unison as simply as possible. Unison conveys the idea of all together; but in this case is meant the "altogether" of dear *Trilby*, and not the dictionary meaning of the term. My contention is that a humane composer would have carried his *motif* one step farther, to an *allegro* movement descriptive of a warm bath,

a loofa, and a hot drink. The audience, after this embarrassing experience, could then retire with the comfortable feeling that they had left the *Lady Istar* in a pleasing glow, and that she would be up next morning as fresh as a daisy, and put on her seven variations, none the worse of the exposure *capriccioso*.

To see Coquelin, and to hear these good concerts, the seats are often a bit too high in price, as well as in position for our pleasure ; but for an old song, as they say, there is plenty of good music to be heard in Paris ; and for nothing whatever, in the streets, and markets and churches, there are many things to be seen as good as a play. For example, Madame took us one day to witness the marriage ceremony of one of her old pupils. This old pupil was being led to the altar at the ripe age of eighteen. The civil marriage took place early in the forenoon, and we went at midday to the religious ceremony in church. The

general proceedings were not unlike the normal church-wedding at home, but the play-acting element for me came in with the gorgeously-robed priests, and with the little choir boys, and, above all, with the glorified beadies in cocked hats and red knee-breeches, marching in front of the bridal procession, and thumping the stone pavement with the staves of their battle-axes. They were magnificent fellows, the living images of the bold *gendarmes* of comic opera.

Then we had some beautiful singing and organ music ; and Handel's well-known *Largo* with the harp and violins assisting the organ. There were flowers decorating the church, but neither the bride nor her maids carried bouquets. The four bridesmaids, instead of flowers, had dainty little money-bags to match their pretty dresses ; and just when the bride was all but married, six groomsmen gave their hands to the six bridesmaids, and round the church they

came, hand in hand, the maids taking a collection for the poor in their little silk money-bags. They looked like pages from one of Walter Crane's picture books, slowly minuetting down the middle and up the aisles of the church, on their rounds of charity. This seems to me a beautiful custom of the French wedding, and infinitely superior to ours of carrying expensive bouquets. Perhaps I am biased by the particular charm of the very young bridesmaid who curtsied to me. When I saw her coming I at once changed to a heavier coin, and began to quote Suckling :

" No sun upon an Easter day
Is half so fine a sight."

And after that little play with its happy ending, I have to chronicle the comedy which took place with my friend the Breton chemist, of whom I told you last week—the man who examined me in "Celtic." I went into his shop to-day for a box of—no matter, nothing

to do with comedy—and when I said “Good morning” to him, he broke into a broad smile, and greeted me with something like “*Comment racine chou !*” What does the fellow mean, I wondered: is he chaffing my somewhat bilious colour, and saying I am rather cabbage-looking? He continued to beam in the most brotherly manner; and, suddenly it dawned upon me that he was merely doing his best to speak to me in our common mother tongue, as it were, and was repeating as well as he could my first lesson in Gaelic to him.



VII

PARIS, *November 1906.*

IN Macronie's welcome letters, he will persist in calling our sojourn in Paris a picnic. I tell him of our frugal meals, of our strenuous studies in French, and of the costly repairs to boots and shoes: I assure him that whatever it may be, it is no holiday. Besides, had it been a real holiday, long ere this we would have been to see Napoleon's tomb, and *Père la Chaise*, and the *Morgue*, and the rest of the

solemn shows; but we have not been, and have no intention of going. It cannot, therefore, be a holiday. At last, our eyes have been opened to see what it is: it is a Pilgrimage. For some time I have been feeling roused, startled, and awakened for the reception of this great truth; and now, having come under the influence of that saintly anthologist, Mr Quiller-Couch, I am converted. I am no longer a sight-seer, a holiday-maker, a doer of cities in record time ("doing is a deadly thing"); I have renounced Cook and all his coaches, I have chosen the pilgrim's way, and have set my face towards Rome.

Resting in Paris for a season, I seek consolation from the *Little Scrip of Good Counsel* which my spiritual father has chosen for me in his latest anthology, *The Pilgrim's Way*. "A man ought," he says in his preface, "at least once in his life, to commit himself to some great undertaking such as a pilgrimage; for a

man has only one life to live. Also, it will help to make him an agreeable fellow. He will derive an astonishing amount of amusement from planning the cost, poring over maps, and discussing the adventure beforehand with his wife ; and afterwards he can tell his neighbours about it." Thus far, Father Q., we have followed your directions : may the end, in our case, justify the means—yea, more than justify them—for the means are scanty. "Next," he goes on to say, "although a holiday is good, a pilgrimage is better ; for it proceeds from those impulses which though he repress them by daily work, still intrude and whisper that he was born for higher things. Almost every man feels that his fate holds him down to a rut : that, though he love his wife and children, he has missed for their sake to do God (whatever his God may be) some service which had been within his free capacity. Therefore, his release upon pilgrimage offers him something

which is more than a holiday, and at the same time something better, being less."

As that great pilgrim father, John Bunyan, might say: Let us continue the discourse upon this present pilgrimage through Paris. I have to tell how, as I was going along, I fell in with a good man from Brechin, a Presbyterian pastor; and, afterwards, with a good woman from Greenock; and to them my speech betrayed me, and we discoursed of many things and of persons well-known to the one and to the other. On a Wednesday the Brechin man invited me to go with him and see a strange sight; and I went. He took me to the *Rue des Acacias*, 43, and led me through a great crowd of waiting poor people to an inner chamber, where six or seven strong men were met prepared to work wonders. This was the committee-room of the "British Charitable Fund," and every Wednesday afternoon these men sit here to consider the strange cases of

the stranded Britisher. I have no papers concerning this charity, no statistics, no appeals: I played the looker-on for two hours, and can only tell you of some of the things I saw. The Brechin Presbyterian is the chairman for the month; on his right he has the chaplain of the British Embassy, and on his left a genial Irish Father: they appear to be great pals. Beside them sit the laity, three jovial huntsmen-looking Englishmen, the type of men adored by dogs and children. There is also present the treasurer of the Fund with his cash-books and his treasury; and, to corroborate or qualify each story of *les misérables*, there is the experienced investigator, for fifteen years a fearless explorer of the Paris slums, the good woman from Greenock. This lady touches a bell, and the long and strange procession is begun. Pensioner follows pensioner for their weekly or fortnightly allowance; and I notice that the chairman or some other member of

committee accosts each applicant by name, and with a friendly greeting. Many of them are the French wives or widows of Englishmen, but often the Cockney accent is in the air ; and once, but only once, the smell of *absinthe*. It is removed, ejected as quickly as possible. A poor woman appears who has been absent for months : she has been earning a living by "washing and dressing," and has not needed the help of the Fund ; but, alas ! her ironing stove got smashed in a flitting, and again she is on the rocks. The good woman from Greenock says it is so ; and the old allowance is at once granted. As the grateful *blanchisseuse* passed out of the room, I swear I saw one of these bluff old huntsmen slip something into her hand in the form of a new ironing stove or a gold coin. I am not sure which : it was certainly one or the other. The dogs and the children are seldom mistaken. New cases come on : enter four swarthy Cingalese, jugglers

and acrobats, who have been swindled and deserted by their business manager. But they are, nevertheless, loyal subjects of His Majesty—jugglers of the King, my boys—and so the British Fund befriends them, and will send them home to Ceylon. Cases such as this, will often cause the weekly expenditure to rise to thousands of francs. Long life, and more power to this great charity, and, look ye there, to the jovial huntsmen—not forgetting the good woman from Greenock.

While I was looking at these poor derelicts, the other half of me was on the pilgrimage to Holy Trinity Lodge, which all good Americans call simply "The Lodge." Now we are falling in with several, and hearing news of other fellow pilgrims; and of all the bands, the most valiant and courageous appear to be the pilgrim daughters of America. It seems to be born with the American girl, the unquenchable longing for study, and improvement, and independence.

For these, she will leave home, and father, and mother (God help her), and cross the Atlantic ; and when she arrives in Paris with her slender savings, and without a word of French, she has no fear ; there is waiting for her the haven of Holy Trinity Lodge.

And what is this Lodge ? It is difficult to say. It is a woman's club, a school of art, a school of music, a salon, a small hospital, and something more than all these, hard to define. It appears to be a warm, motherly sort of place, without being grandmotherly. Such is the impression we get from the girls themselves who frequent it. The lady in charge is no Mrs. Grundy—she is a Miss—but we never mention names, and in her case it might lead to confusion. We have one pilgrim girl in our own house who knows the Lodge and its lady well : you should hear her raving about them, and what they did for her when she first came here. When this girl's European pilgrimage is completed, and she

returns to the daily rounds and common tasks of a schoolma'am, she will always have with her a vision of the *House Beautiful* in Paris, beyond the hill *Difficulty*. The Lodge is now a part of her being : to think of it, to dream of it when she is far, far away, must ever be to her

“ Like bells at evening pealing.”



VIII

PARIS, *November 1906.*

THERE are many ways of getting from place to place in Paris. There is the Metropolitan Underground Railway, which is most convenient and disagreeable, and which we never use. There is the river steam-boat service, which we always employ when our road goes by the river: when it does not, we have to go to the omnibuses, and consider their ways. If you are a wise man, you will en-

deavour as quickly as possible to master the omnibus and play the *correspondance* game for all it is worth ; if you are wealthy and wise, you need only take a *taximètre* ; but if you happen to be healthy, wealthy, and wise, you will probably walk all the way. There are great extensions of the Metropolitan going on at present, the streets are " up " in many districts, traffic is much diverted, and so are we. The French navy is a fine fellow to watch at work : the glorious colourings of his old corduroys do more bewitch me than the furs and furbelows of the *Champs Élysées*. Here are the brilliant blues, and the old, the very old golds, and the dove shades, which, to an artist who knows the value of colour, ought to be worth a ransom the leg ; and as for the seats, I should say they are priceless ! When a range of these corduroys adjourn with their owners to a small *café*, it is a masterpiece, waiting for a master to paint. So much there is of the picturesque in the common

street life that one is loath to devote valuable daylight to mere museums and galleries. Barrow-loads of flowers and vegetables are constantly flitting past like blazes of Monticelli ; and in the narrow ways which radiate from the great central market, there are rows upon rows of old women stall-keepers, who are sitting now, as they must have sat centuries ago to the old masters. Thus, in Paris, there is an environment, the result of the old and well-confirmed artistic instinct of the nation. In our country we do well to give our children Walter Crane's picture-books to study ; but here the children need only be sent out to play.

Nevertheless, we have found time to look at some pictures of the usual kind, framed and hung in the orthodox manner. We have been to see an exhibition of new and original coloured engravings and lithographs : an admirable show of an art which comes as a boon to men of moderate means. Possibly, by this time, some

of these prints may be on their way to the dealers at home. We are in love with three of them, which are true to the life—to the picturesque street life which I have been trying to indicate. They are the work of François T. Simon, and in charming colour represent *Les Bouquinistes*, *Marché aux Légumes*, and *Les Pottiers*. When we return—if the wherewithal return with us—I shall certainly buy the first and the last of these.

We have also seen the Autumn Salon ; a most bewildering show of many fine things and of others suggestive of a variety entertainment, with “freaks,” and astonishing turns. “Art is long,” they say ; in Paris, we find it as broad as it is long. They say again, “Art is nature digested” ; an illuminating definition, in the face of so much bilious colour and wretched line ; but when one has dismissed the ill-drawn crudities, and dreary nudities, there is still to be faced a really subtle problem in the work of

Paul Gauguin. It is one of the strangest of the strange "turns." Paul Gauguin, the French artist, died three years ago. He tried his hand at many things, painting, sculpture, ceramics, wood-cuts, and lithographs; and examples of his work in these various arts formed a special exhibit of this year's Autumn Salon. He was trained in the Paris schools, and after learning to draw (and his early studies show that he could draw magnificently), he made up his mind that modern methods, and conventions, and modern civilisation itself, were all wrong; to him a weariness of the flesh and but as dust and ashes. An artist, he maintained, must either be a mere plagiarist, or a revolutionary; and he determined to be the revolutionary out and out. He would begin at the beginning again; he would blot out all the traditions; he would forget Raphael and all the rest of them; and in a fine *Locksley Hall* enthusiasm, return to Nature and paint as the unspoilt

Aztec or Maori might do if he only knew how. He went off to the savagedom of Tahiti, and there, for his models, at least, he took some savage women; and painted them in many squatting groups, which appear to me—I must frankly confess—reminiscent of the work of savage tribes, the work, if you will, of superior savages, but of merely antiquarian value and interest.

And yet to a considerable number of people in Paris, Gauguin is a great artist. They maintain that he has succeeded in his aim: that he has gone back to the childhood of the world, and looked at Nature afresh for himself, as in the beginning, before Civilisation had drawn over her the veils of convention. But Gauguin makes the world no younger, no brighter for us: he has no message whatever—or we are not ready to receive it. We are of those who are persuaded that our world has not been made poorer by Raphael—the rejected of Gauguin—and who be-

lieve that the eternal injunction to mankind to become like a little child shines, and will continue to shine clearly from the *Sistine Madonna* long after the barbaric, stumbling expressions of Gauguin are forgotten—granting, as we are willing enough to grant, that this was the message he too was struggling to deliver.

We are a slightly divided house over this Art controversy; Jules and Alphonse have come under the influence of Gauguin. Some part of their emotional being is in tune with his. There we must leave it, for agreement and disagreement in Art, as well as in Religion, are mainly questions of temperament. In Art especially, the emotional understanding is the one thing needful; and we may at once reconcile ourselves to the fact that we do not all feel alike; and, the gods be praised, we never shall.

It is good to get back to the streets, and to the bridges; to watch a fine sun-set in the sky,

and the changing reflections on the river; to contrast it all with the light of other days upon another river, and to wander back to our rooms with just the faintest touch of longing for a day at home.





IX

PARIS, *December* 1906.

WE looked through two desirable mansions this week, both of them the property of the French Government and much fallen from their original estate. One of them is now the historical museum of the city, with a wonderful collection of all sorts of things illus-

trating the history of Paris, and of the Revolution. Some other day these may interest me ; but this time I did not go to break my back over the contents of glass-covered cases ; I went to wander through the rooms in search of the ghosts of the departed. My interest was confined to the fact that here in this house, for eighteen years—from 1677 till 1696—lived one of the great queens of belles-lettres, and the most devoted of mothers, Madame de Sévigné. I was not fortunate in my search ; and for that I do not blame the departed. If only some of the rooms had been left as Madame loved to have them ; but imagine the annoyance of a pilgrim from this or any other world, to find in one of Madame's own rooms a table, and on it—a model of the water-works of *La Samaritaine* ! What I wanted to recapture if I could was the spirit of Madame de Sévigné herself, in her own Salon. I walked round with mixed feelings, gazing at the gorgeously decorated ceilings, and

confounding the French Government and all its water-works.

The other place visited was also a book-lover's shrine—the house of Victor Hugo in the *Place des Vosges*. This *Place des Vosges* is a beautiful old-world square of steep-roofed warm red houses, with an arcaded pavement round every side. It rests apart from the busy thoroughfares, and when you drop upon it you feel at once that things of note must have happened here, and may do so again. Victor Hugo verily knew what he was about when he went house-hunting, and fixed on this *Place* with the landlord of No. 6. Here, from 1833 till 1848, he occupied the second floor of the house, and, many a time, must have been moved by the magic of this old Square. It occupies the site of the royal palace court where Henry II. was accidentally killed in 1565 at a tournament. Afterwards, when the palace was demolished, the square became a great horse-

market, and a rendezvous for duellists. Now it is a sleepy hollow, where a band plays in summer, and children romp all the year round. What a fine court of dream for the great poet and romancer, as he looked down upon it from his study windows. This simple, but commodious house, much more than Madame's gilded residence, retains the impression of a personality. There, we are oppressed by "the museum"; but here, we are in the presence of the poet. Here are his books, and writing-tables; his ink-pots and quill-pens—the precious pens sealed in little glass tubes to secure them from the ravages of time and the unscrupulous globe-trotter: the gifted pen that gave to the world the immortal story of *Cosette* and *Jean Valjean*.

It was the bookish instinct that drew us to this house, and it was not easy to get away from the old play-bills, the sketches by Hugo himself, and the fine library of 4000 volumes.

And that brings me to mention one of the mysteries of Paris, overlooked by Hugo, or by Eugene Sue; and that is, the number and excellence of the book-shops. I suppose the really first-rate book-shops of my native city—"the second in the empire"—can be counted upon one's fingers. I know them all, alas! too well; and certainly, there are less than ten of the first order. In Paris, however, no matter in what direction I wander, every few paces, I seem to be waylaid by a book-shop which must be examined—just for a moment. Every street of any importance will offer from six to ten of these temptations to give one pause. Another remarkable thing is that the number of good milliners' shops appears to correspond exactly, or almost exactly, with the tally of book-shops.

When Mona and I strike an interesting street, we sometimes decide to go our several ways. Naturally, I rest at the first book-shop, while

my fellow-pilgrim, on the look-out for a becoming cockle-hat forges ahead to a milliner's. I then overtake and pass her to examine a second window-full, and so the race proceeds; and at the finish, the winner seldom leads by more than one shop-length. From the hats of the Parisian ladies we see it may be possible for the host of milliners to exist; but there is no indication from the heads of the men, or from their coat-tail pockets, how the army of booksellers survive. I have made friends with a few bookish Frenchmen, who tell me that they do not think the average Parisian is much of a book-lover, or book-buyer. This only adds to the mystery; but possibly the few who love books are constrained to buy more and more for the preservation of the bookseller. How could they themselves survive without him? One of these men invited me to dine with him, and afterwards took me into his own private den; a room of about

fourteen feet square, into which he had contrived to crowd over 3000 volumes. They were there for use and not for ornament, in ragged battalions they looked so different from our cloth-bound home collections; for, with a very few exceptions, they were in the yellow paper covers, "impudently French," as W. E. Henley styled them from amid the lugubrious austerities of an Edinburgh hospital.

I have a fair number of books myself at home, and very bravely came away with less than half a dozen in my bag. On arriving here, however, I found in my room a pathetic, beseeching little book-case of four empty shelves. What could I do? There was no resisting the mute appeal: it was a pitiful case. From week to week, I have been giving it a little assistance, and it is picking up wonderfully. Two of its shelves are now clothed, and in their right mind, and the others are waiting in faith. Several of my purchases

are purely educational works. I have bought, for example, the French equivalent to "Step by Step, or the child's first Lesson Book." On the cover there is a drawing of a most fascinating little French girl, and under it this exasperating inscription: "*J'ai cinq ans et je lis.*" Yes, you dear little monkey of five years, I know you can read, and you can also speak your language; and here am I, old enough to be your grandfather, struggling to speak it too, but I cannot! There are few things more comically humiliating to the Briton abroad, gasping for utterance, than to listen to the fluent jabberings of these infants at play. Yes! Yes! we know exactly the reason, and how it must be so; but reasons do not rid us of the sense of amazement and despicable ignomy. I am not at all sure that this "Child's First Reader" is going to do much for me, but I am reminded by some beautiful verse, that it is going to be the finest thing in the world

for the child. The lines are by an American writer, Rupert Hughes, and appeared in *Appleton's Magazine*. They are of the true-blue Stevenson type :

"Dear little girl, this little book,
Is less a primer than a key
To sunder gates where wonder waits
Your 'Open Sesame !'

"These tiny syllables look large :
They'll fret your wide, bewildered eyes ;
But "Is the cat upon the mat ?"
Is passport to the skies.

"For, yet awhile, and you shall turn
From Mother Goose to Avon's swan ;
From Mary's lamb to grim Khayyám,
And Mancha's mad-wise Don.

"You'll writhe at Jean Valjean's disgrace :
And D'Artagnan and Ivanhoe
Shall steal your sleep ; and you shall weep
At Sidney Carton's woe.

"Make haste to wander these old roads,
O envied little parvenue ;
For all things trite shall leap alight
And bloom again for you !"



X

PARIS,
December 1906.

FOR some
weeks,
and for an
hour or two
daily, I have

been playing a fairly good game of make-believe. I attend the famous University, the *Sorbonne*, and listen to its cultured professors lecturing upon many subjects. I have heard M. Lemonnier upon the history

of Art; M. Gazier upon Racine and the French Theatre; M. Martha upon Latin Eloquence; and three or four lesser lights endeavouring to make the dark ages clear. To me, the make-believe game is, in the first place, that I am a University student again; and in the second place, that I am understanding all that is being said. I play the game; I take care to keep awake—which is more than many can do; I try to look attentive and interested; and I make it a point to applaud heartily at the end of the hour. The *Sorbonne* professors have an easy conversational style of lecturing, which is trying to the people in the back seats, who are also continually being disturbed by the noise made by the late-comers. The lectures are free, and people may come and go as they choose. They are well patronised, as something for nothing usually is; and to students of the French language they give excellent practice to the ear. At first, I understood very

little; I had to content myself with mere crumbs of speech, such as "that is to say," "on no account whatever," and a few others manifestly cribbed from a phrase-book; but in this third week, I begin to understand more, and to see that the professors introduce phrases worth knowing of their own composition. Crowds of all nationalities flock to these lectures; now and again one sees the pathetic sight, some poor shipwrecked brother, to whom the sole attraction has doubtless been the comfortable temperature of the room. As a rule the audiences are alert and intelligent; but when the lecture hour happens to be 2 p.m., it is no small thing for the most intelligent to keep alert, coming straight from lunch to these over-heated rooms. Many come with the best intentions in the world, bent upon listening faithfully, even as if they were at church and under the eye of their own minister; but to some, alas, there is a great falling away from

grace. A backslider of this type caused a little sensation at one of our lectures ; he was slumbering peacefully and in comparative quiet a few seats from me, but was awakened suddenly by the professor halting to take a sip of sugared water—the favourite professorial tipple ; making a desperate attempt to dissemble, the newly-wakened greeted the professor's silence with some hearty applause. Alas, this only added to his sin and increased his confusion. It was extremely comical, but I was sorry for the poor culprit. I had been feeling so sleepy myself that I could not help reflecting that there, but for the grace of God, ruffs Anthony Rowley !

In these fine halls or amphitheatres, if one grow weary of the lecturer there is always a beautiful fresco above him to rest the eye and the mind. The Large Amphitheatre, in which the University's great meetings are held, has been decorated by Puvis de Chavanne. It is a

huge place accommodating 3500 persons. It also contains statues of six great Frenchmen, including that of Robert de Sorbon, who founded the original *hostel* in the Thirteenth Century; and of Cardinal Richelieu, who erected *The Sorbonne* proper in 1629. The old Church of the *Sorbonne* holds within it the marble tomb of the great Cardinal, described by the guide-books as "a work of admirable finish." Above the tomb hangs Richelieu's hat—also of admirable finish. The Church is all that remains of Richelieu's building; the huge modern pile dates from 1885. These facts I guarantee to be fairly accurate. I have poked the masonry with my umbrella, and feel satisfied that the new colleges are about 250 years younger than the church; and as for the other dates and descriptions, are they not written at page 275 of Baedeker's Handbook for Paris!

I must not omit to record the presence of

the woman student, of whom there are two types, the diligent and the dilettante. The total number of students in the five faculties is close upon 12,000, and this includes about 400 matriculated women students. These you can tell at once by their eager business air, by the huge leather pockets carried under the arm, containing their class-books and note-books, and by their "signing the book" at the open lectures. It is to the free lectures that the other type of student flocks, woman the non-matriculate; all sorts and conditions of women, the cultured, the idly curious, the chaperon. To attend M. Lemonnier's course upon Art is to be in the swim of fashion, and ladies there are in a large majority. He addresses an audience of from twelve to fifteen hundred, and when I counted the heads on the front benches to arrive at this estimate, I could not help noticing that for every one with a bald spot, four had hat pins. One has to go so early to be sure of a

seat at this lecture, that I have reluctantly decided to drop out of the swim, and pick up my accent elsewhere.

I have had my first introduction to the French medical student. I met him one morning in the mass, about four or five hundred strong walking in procession, demonstrating over some real or fancied tyranny on the part of one of his professors. When I saw him, he was literally *en bloc*, disorganising the street traffic; but he was good-humoured and well-behaved. Two "mossy-bearded" youths headed the procession, bearing banner-wise between them, one of Barrère's clever caricatures of their particular faculty, the ranks behind them chanting "*conspuez, conspuez!*" to the name of their *bête noire*. They looked gentlemanly fellows, more smartly and soberly clad than the budding Sawbones of home; looking in fact, as if they were already professional men in practice. I could not detect

the presence of that sturdy type, familiar to us in Scotland, the raw country youth, the son of the crofter or fisherman, who in roughest homespun, makes his descent upon Edinburgh or Glasgow; and there, in four or five years, works himself into broadcloth, and a consulting-room in the New Town.

To take advantage of all that offers one would need to inherit and keep working a few relays of mind and body, and a large extension of time. In addition to the *Sorbonne* course, there are the free lectures of the College of France; and another admirable series endowed by the Prince of Monaco. One has only to apply to the Prince's secretary to obtain a free card of admission to a course of lectures by the foremost scholars of France, including M. Charcot. The Prince draws an immense revenue from Monte Carlo; he cannot curb the folly of mankind; but he thinks he may turn the ignoble overflow of wealth into worthier

channels. It is a curious problem in ethics, and a strange turn of Fortune's wheel. The fool endows the Prince: the Prince endows the scholar. Out of the pockets of knaves and gamblers proceedeth wisdom !



XI

PARIS, *December 1906.*

CHRISTMAS is almost upon us again, but here in France, the signs of its advent are not so manifest as at home. The shops in the churchy quarter of St. Sulpice are making a special feature of tiny babes in the manger, and candles of all kinds and sizes, from the small tapers for Christmas trees to the huge ornamented pillars of wax, as thick as a monk's skull, and as tall as a high priest.

I am tempted to step inside and price a six-foot candle, inquire for what high occasions they are intended, and obtain an idea of their expiatory value. If they ever are lit—which I am inclined to doubt—it must be wildly exciting and creepy to watch the gradual demolition of all the intricate devices that are carved and painted on the surface of the wax. In the streets, a still more beautiful sign of Christmas appears; fine branches of mistletoe for sale, of a freshness and beauty unknown to us heretofore. The little twigs which we see at home, doubtless serve their endearing turns; but they are poor dried-up things compared with the strong wood, and the brave green leaves and berries which the country folk bring into Paris, slung upon poles, and borne on their shoulders. It is not the mistletoe's fault, if the French people do not know the charms of a merry Christmas.

But in Paris, Christmas is the solemn church

festival; the merriment is reserved for the first days of the New Year. Now, the universal label of the shop window is *étrennes*; a curious word signifying "handsel" in the singular, and in the plural "New-Year's gift." On New-Year's Day the Paris householders have to face it very much in the plural. They are obliged to *étrenner* all day long to servants and *concierges* within their gates; and to all and sundry without, who may have had the honour of carrying up coals, or of borrowing a broom-stick. It appears to be a much more exacting tax upon the Parisians, and more firmly established than the Londoner's Christmas-box. Hard cash may satisfy the servants and tradesmen, but for friends and acquaintances a huge deal in chocolate is essential. If a man has been invited to a dinner party during the season, the correct etiquette of Paris is to call upon the hostess on New Year's Day and present her with a

box of chocolate. I cannot imagine what the hospitable Frenchwoman does with all her sweet *étrennes*, but possibly the chocolate-box becomes a medium of polite exchange, and a man may come to his own again. The chocolate presentation may be less expensive than at first sight appears. The shop-windows are crammed with *étrennes* for the children; and, by the way, if you should happen to be a child, it is no good hanging up stockings in this country; Monsieur Santa Claus will have nothing to do with them. When the French boys and girls are hoping for a visit from M. Claus, they place their boots and shoes on the hearth and Santa understands. I am confident he does his best for them. I have come to that conclusion by noticing the enormous space devoted to toys in all the big shops; but more particularly since I have seen what a jolly companionable father the average Frenchman is to his boys and girls. On holi-

days, and half-holidays, in the museums and picture-galleries, and in the parks and gardens, we are constantly seeing the fathers and the children having the best of times together. The little boots are sure to be generously handselled when Santa comes along.

The toys are legion ; but, as might be expected in Paris, chief among them all are the motor-cars, from little clock-work models to huge, strongly-built wagons, propelled by Shank's patent of two-boy power, with lamps and hooters complete. Motor-cars are so much in evidence you cannot get away from them : perhaps I ought to have said that it is only by exercising the greatest agility that you do get away from them. There is being held at present, in the Grand Palace of the *Champs Élysées*, the *Salon de l'Automobile* ; rather a cunning name for a great show of motor-cars coming immediately after the *Salon d'Automne* of pictures. The importance of this great

industry is clearly indicated by the magnitude of the show and the money spent upon it. The *Place de la Concorde*, the *Pont Alexandre III.*, and the avenues leading up to the Palace, are decorated by day and illuminated by night as if a Royal wedding or a great victory were being celebrated. I paid my franc to see the show; I saw hundreds, probably thousands, of motors, and all things pertaining to the motor; and at last, at a side stall, we came across the very thing we were wanting. In the narrow streets of our *Quarter*, it is just possible to evade the motors, but even on the pavements, there is no escape from their bespattering mud. So, at the grand *Salon de l'Automobile*, we gave no order for a *Darracq*, but we purchased a good stiff cloth-brush.

To return to our shops, and *étrennes*, and the glad New Year. There is a little French girl of ten to whom I have been telling tales of Winsome and the North. I told her of our

hills and lochs, of snow and ice, and of skating and curling. I told her how Santa, or Sandy Claus, as he is often called in Scotland, preferred stockings to boots, and when he happened to bring a small barrow for my nephew, he actually fixed it into his knickerbockers. Fanchette then turned me to describe the shop-windows, and the special *étrennes* of Britain. At first, I could think of nothing that would be novel to her; but at last, an inspiration came from the land of cakes: I sang a song of short-bread, unknown to France. I sang of its good name throughout the land, and of its glorification at Christmas time, and the New Year; of the ribbons, I sang, and of the bannerettes and boxes; of the shapes and sizes, of length, and breadth, and thickness; above all, I sang of the icing, the delectable ornament, and the genial inscription. Now Fanchette and I are beseeching the lady Mona to don her cooking apron, and to produce this wonder in France—some

cakes of Scottish shortbread. I volunteer to look after the decoration, and to add in French and sugared print, the cordial sentiments of my country-men ; but I am just beginning to see the hopelessness of my task. It is apparently beyond the powers of syntax and prosody to express in French "For auld lang syne," and "Frae ye ken wha."



XII

PARIS, *December* 1906.

MONSIEUR, the postman, has called upon me for *étrennes*—his Christmas box. His polite method of asking for it is to present you with a little calendar for 1907 ; then you have the next move, while he beams upon you and awaits your pleasure. My postman was charming, and as an individual, not to be resisted ; but if I had been able to regard him solely as a postman, representing the postal

system of France, my pleasure would have been to kick him downstairs.

Since we have been sojourning in Paris, no less than five letters and packets have failed to reach us, which we know were posted from home. Many other cases there may be, of which we have no knowledge; friends and relations who may be wroth with us are requested to accept this intimation and explanation. Their letters have not been received. It is specially desirable that this state of matters in France should be understood and remembered by all happy-go-lucky chance acquaintances who may be writing me for small loans of money. They need place no dependence whatever upon this wretched postal system of France. When I have told my tale of woe to other British residents in Paris, they all say they have suffered in the same way again and again, and have no redress. One man tells me that his custom is to make use

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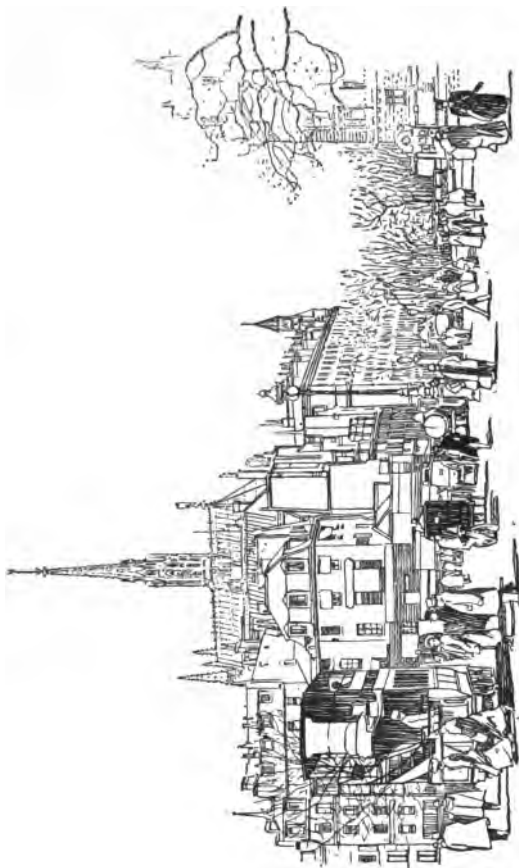
of every occasion when he has friends going over to England: he saves up not merely his small parcels, but often his letters for his friends to take with them to be posted in London. There is security obtained at the cost of registration; but often much discomfort to the receiver of such letters, who is rudely awakened by the early postman demanding his signature. I might also add that the greatest security is apparently obtained when our friends resort to the system of inadequate postage. That opinion is formed from the large number of letters and cards that are unfailingly delivered upon which there is five-pence to pay. Once, and once only, we had the satisfaction of receiving a good fat letter from Clapham, upon which there was nothing to pay, in spite of its solitary penny stamp.

We are beginning to face the solemn thought that our days in Paris are numbered. We have been counting them up, and make them out to

be one and twenty: by the middle of January we shall probably be turning our faces towards Rome. We are starting a fresh experience of a few weeks; we have left, with many regrets, our friends of the Latin Quarter, to bring in the New Year in the very heart of the Boulevards. Paris has from thirty to forty wide thoroughfares named Boulevards, but the well-known eight which run from the *Madeleine* to the *Place de la Republique* are known as *The Boulevards*. From semi-vagabondage we have returned to the centre of civilisation. The change implies a considerable addition to the weekly bills; and higher standards in clothing and laundry work. It is to be hoped that civilisation will give us a fair return for the extra expenditure, but I have my doubts. The soup is decidedly warmer—but not so the company. We have what is called “a better table,” and, for that matter, better beds and chairs, but I am afraid

we shall miss the freedom of the Latin Quarter—and freedom, O my brothers, is a noble thing!

When living near to the *Sorbonne*, one of my glorious privileges was to buy the firewood for our own private consumption. The best a keen buyer can do this December, is at the rate of eight sous for five bundles; and these I often bundled home myself. That freedom is denied me now. As with the firewood, so was it with the masculine and singular *pantalon*, who, or which at home, is always neuter and a pair. When the polite tailor of the *rue de Seine*, after the desperate repairs, folded my *pantalon*, and without any wrap or covering, proffered him tenderly to me as if he were a baby, I saw that no incivility or indecorum was intended; it was simply the habit of the *Quarter*. I acquired the habit; I took him in my arms, and bore him swiftly home, his little gallows-buttons glancing in the sunshine. But



PLACE ST. MICHEL

here, in the respectable regions of the Grand Boulevards and even when we get back to our own beloved land of gospel light and liberty, I shall have to resort to the cowardly subterfuge of brown paper and a piece of string.

However, for richer or poorer, for better or for worse, we shall cleave to this so-called better Quarter for the next three weeks. The Boulevards mark the centre of Paris; the centre of the world, the Frenchmen believes. Here are shops by the score for millionaires only, with the richest and rarest Art treasures exposed in the windows. During the last week the annual transformation scene has come over the Boulevards. On the outer edge of the wide pavements, and facing the splendid shop-windows, rough wooden booths and stalls have been erected, extending the whole length, and on both sides of the Boulevards, for the sale of toys and sweets, and the thousand-and-one wares of the cheap Jack. It is a thousand-

and-one pities that the authorities permit so many of Jack's wares to be nasty as well as cheap. To patrol this double line of shops and stalls in the late afternoon, when the crowds and the lights are turned on, produces a curious state of mind. The quaint opposition of the very dear to the very cheap, of the rich to the poor, is most bewildering when seen for the first time: we are not in Paris at all; we are walking with Alice in Wonderland. It is the feeling of being carried right out of our work-a-day world and into a story book. A similar sensation of glamour has happened to many travellers on their first arrival in Venice. After the long and tiresome railway journey, it may be your luck to step from the stuffy compartment of the train—not into a cab—but into fair moonlight and a real gondola, and to go gliding past the palaces on the Grand Canal. Experiences of this class are always first and last experiences—they never repeat themselves.

Should we ever return to Paris at this time of year, we may expect to find the grand shops and the poor stalls, but never again the Wonderland: the gilt will be off the gingerbread.

But the Boulevards, softly beguiling, are not going to separate us altogether from our first love. I am still going to the *Sorbonne*, and the *Sorbonne*, in the person of a congenial French student, is still coming twice a week to me. I try to read the French of Anatole France to him and then he endeavours to "English" it to me; and we check each other's unconscious indulgence in bad language. We are reading *La Rotisserie de la Reine Pédauque*, and enjoying it immensely. And here a curious coincidence occurs to me: my friend Macronie and I have a time-honoured custom of exchanging books at Christmas. The one I have just received from him is called *The Beloved Vagabond*, a novel by

William J. Locke ; and for days I have been saying to myself that *La Rotisserie* is the book for Macronie, if he would only take up French again. The coincidence lies in the discovery that *The Vagabond* breathes the atmosphere of *La Rotisserie* ; and that is, the very breath of our well-beloved *quartier latin*.



HOMES OF THE PARISIANS

XIII

PARIS, *January* 1907.

IN previous visits to Paris, we have often been royally entertained by Frenchmen, but always at some restaurant or café; during this sojourn we have for the first time received the warm hospitality of several French homes. By their own confession, the French of the *comfortable*, or middle classes, are not given to hospitality to strangers. In Paris, men of this class usually live in a small *appartement*

of from four to six rooms, to which is attached the merest dot of a kitchen or cooking cupboard. On her regular days, Madame receives her friends and acquaintances to afternoon cake and wine, but rarely ventures upon a social evening, or a formal dinner party. For enterprises of such pith and moment she has neither space nor inclination. The genuine love of family is there, however; the infinite riches of their little rooms. One of the commonest and most beautiful things in France is the undisguised affection which exists between parents and children. In our country parents too often pride themselves upon the tremendous depth of their affection, which is presumed to be always there, away deep down; so deep that it seldom or never comes to the surface. It is a dour and heartless tradition, and brings about many a tragedy; sons and daughters holding tight to sorrows and sins from which the open assurance of a parent's love and

affection might have saved them. In this respect, at least, the Frenchman's house is often a better home than we build in Scotland ; a place kept sacred to the family, and the few close intimates who are as "one of the family." He does not make his house, as we do, a gathering place for old companions, and for the friends the children make ; and it never occurs to him to have visitors, or to offer a friend a bed for the night. This last characteristic of French middle-class life became known to me in a curious way. The student friend who exchanges with me French for English brought with him this week a copy of *A Window in Thrums*. Phrases such as "the morn's morn" and "the morn's nicht" required daylight thrown upon them ; and one other, that had led him on the wrong tack altogether, was "the spare bedroom." He had conceived this to be a room scantily furnished. When I explained to him what "the spare bedroom" really meant for

us and for our visitors, he informed me that French families never have the extra room, and never have the visitor: as a general rule they can only afford to have the rooms that are absolutely necessary for the family. Alas! they know not what they lose. Of the good things of this life, surely we at home can count as one of the best, the intimate cracks at bedtime, when we can snap our fingers at timetables, and revel in the delightful feeling that the friends who are with us have come to stay.

The Paris houses into which we have been received for an evening *en famille* have all been on the flat system. One of the most modern has a small dining-room leading into an equally small drawing-room by folding-doors, three bedrooms, a kitchenette, a fairly spacious passage or hall, and, to our French friends, the crowning glory of the house, an English bathroom. The annual rent of this

appartement on the sixth floor is £120. For this sum, I should add, they receive a number of extras: to wit, a small room on the attic floor for the domestic; hot and cold water; and the steam-heating of the entire building, which means a good deal, seeing coal in Paris is three times the cost of the British article. The electric light is fitted in every room, the tenants of course paying for what they use; and they also have the services of the *concierge*, and the convenience of an *ascenseur*. I wonder if the *concierge* system will ever take root in our country: it is universal in the Paris houses, and the lady seems to supply a felt want. The *concierge* attends to everything on her side of the tenant's keyhole: she looks after the cleaning of the stair and the good stair-carpet, and her presence and services remove all occasions for stairhead encounters. To be deprived too suddenly of the homely drama might vex the

ladies of our land ; and possibly the reticent Scot himself would not care to have all his letters, parcels, and messages left with a *concierge*. He might begin to think that the woman knew too much—that he himself was being delivered into her hands. In Paris, I am sure she gets to know a great deal ; there is a saying that in affairs of the heart, the two things a man has most to fear are his conscience and his *concierge* ! Whether the amorous Frenchman puts up with both, or one only, is a debatable point ; but the Scot, both in love and in war, will do well to stick by his conscience—if he has one, and can keep it in fair working order.

I regret I cannot describe the details of the French menus submitted to us by our hosts. I know we had “victuals and drink” of excellent quality ; but when a man’s mind is actively employed upon the construction of French phrases, it cannot take in everything. I can

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recall the unusual decoration of one table, where the fruit seemed to be scattered at random all over the white linen ; but it was skilfully done, bits of tempting colour waiting, as it were, to be sketched and painted before consumption.

Few of our friends spoke English, but all took pride in the fact that their sons and daughters did. To speak English and to have some knowledge of English Literature has become an essential part of the French idea of a liberal education. In the pursuit of this knowledge they leave no stone, or at least no table unturned. The "five-o'clock" is now an institution in Paris, and the Parisians frequent the tea-rooms, ostensibly to sip China tea, but really to drink in what they can catch of the flow of English conversation. So I am informed by the manager of one of the popular tea-rooms in the *rue de Rivoli*. It is a fair exchange ; indeed, the Anglo-Saxon has so

much excellent French offered him gratis at the *Sorbonne*, that it would be ungracious to grudge the Gaul the little drops of English and torrents of American that fall from these afternoon-tea tables.

I have hitherto thought that the French pick up English more easily than we do French ; but Frenchmen declare that our language presents enormous difficulties to them : my present idea is that the hardships must be equal, especially with the difficulties in pronunciation. And this recalls the curious case of my student friend of the *Sorbonne* who is qualifying for the Consular service and has to pass stiff examinations in German and English. He has passed with honours in German ; but, on the score of defective pronunciation, he has just been ploughed in English. His examiners are French professors, who hold degrees of London and Oxford, and are supposed to know our language very thoroughly ; but the amusing

thing—although far from that to my friend—is that he really speaks most excellent English with the perfect accent of a Dublin man. On questioning him, I discovered that when he was a boy, his tutor in English had been an Irish priest. The poor fellow is now doing his utmost to get rid of a fine rich brogue, in order to satisfy his too provincial examiners.



XIV

PARIS, *January* 1907.

I HAVE been missing the companionship of my books: I have no memory for exact quotation; but I can always lay my hand on the book, and the page, and the spot on the page, for the lines that I want. I wanted very badly to quote a few verses the other night. The festive dance and the jovial song were

about to cease ; and I remarked to my student friend, who is a modest Frenchman, and never boasts about his brains, or his good looks, or his youth :

“You are a lucky dog, my boy ; you will have to see some of these nice girls home, I suppose.”

He gave me a look of vast astonishment, and soon made clear to me what an impossible person I was—in France—to have suggested such an improper idea. He explained that in every case a maid, or some elderly person, would come for the young ladies and convey them safely home.

I told him of the more excellent custom of our country, where the girls are usually conveyed and not conveyed home. And then I wanted so much to go to the north-east corner of my book-room, the second shelf, for a certain book—I could put my hand on it in the dark—and to read to him every line of Clarence

Stedman's poem, *The Doorstep*. It is very simple ; it tells of what happened once, and may happen again, round the poet's home in America ; of a boy and girl's walk home from evening church, and of their lingering together on the doorstep until the voices of the old folks behind them reached their hearing. The last four verses describe so personal an experience, that I always keep them by heart :

"She shook her ringlets from her hood
And with a 'Thank you Ned,' dissembled :
But yet I knew she understood
With what a daring wish I trembled.

"A cloud passed kindly overhead,
The moon was slyly peeping through it,
Yet hid its face, as if it said—
'Come, now or never ! do it ! do it !'

"My lips till then had only known
The kiss of mother and of sister ;
But, somehow, full upon her own
Sweet, rosy, darling mouth—I kissed her !

"Perhaps 'twas boyish love ; yet still,
Oh, listless woman, weary lover !
To feel once more that fresh, wild thrill
I'd give—but who can live youth over ?"

O youth! youth! and these happy lands, where boys and girls, thinking no evil, can have such blissful times together; and the girls so shyly kissed on the doorstep become the angels of the house!

It was in this house where we are now staying, a comfortable private hotel, that the revels were held. We are surrounded by travellers from every quarter of the globe. Not many are from Britain or America, but there is a goodly company of South Americans who speak Spanish; a sprinkling of Germans, Italians, and French; and one or two others whose nationality presents to us a fascinating dining-room puzzle. The little *concierge* lady who attends at the inquiry office of the hotel speaks seven languages—English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Romaic, and Spanish; and from time to time has need of them all.

On Christmas night our courteous landlady entertained her medley of visitors to music and

dancing ; and again on New-Year's Eve. At ten minutes to 1907, the candles of the Christmas-tree were lit for the second time, and the company joined hands and danced round the tree to the music of our various national airs. It is true "Scots wha hae" was ignored ; but when the clock struck twelve, Scotland came to her own, and

"Man to man, the warld o'er,"

and woman to woman likewise, made a brave attempt to crown all our efforts with the first verse and chorus of *Auld Lang Syne*.

A set of Spaniards danced what was supposed to be *The Lancers*, but in their hands, or rather, upon their toes, the dance became a stately minuet, and much more graceful than the whirling romp that goes by the same name at home. The Spaniards, however, fell very far from grace during the performance of a distinguished violinist, a lady member of M. Colonne's orchestra. She played divinely ; and yet the *Senors* and *Senoritas* chattered

and screeched among themselves in a way that called for the restoration of the Spanish Inquisition, with its imprisonments, and tortures, and violent deaths. Even the impolite Frenchmen were shocked, which seems a shocking thing to say, and brings me to the question of manners and deportment in France.

The French language of everyday talk is soaked in suavity; but the ladies of France assert that with most of their men, it is a lip-language only, that true politeness is too seldom expressed by the deed. To accept such a statement as of universal application would be foolishness—the gentleman born is born to every nation—but the little courtesies of men to women in public places, at theatres and concerts, or in the course of travel, are fewer and less sincere in France than at home. I am not aware that the average Briton has any excess of chivalry to boast about, but French women who have lived, and moved about

among us are in this case the judges: it is they who condemn their countrymen—not I.

We have had the pleasure of meeting several French girl students, who have been at school in Scotland or England, and have gone home, not only with an amazing knowledge of the best that has been said and done in Britain, but with an intense appreciation of the freedom which they so innocently enjoyed in our country. They say it has felt something like entering a prison-house to come back to the bondage of convention which France still so rigidly applies to the young unmarried girl. They recall the picnics and excursions they made with other girls in town and country, asking their way when they lost it, and feeling all the time that every strange man, woman, or policeman (and he especially) regarded them and treated them as ladies. To do in Paris, without a chaperone, what they could so innocently do in London, would be interpreted

by their friends and by the Parisians as the unmistakable sign of degradation. They would at once lose caste and respectability ; their only hope of salvation would be to be taken for Americans or English. And that is the bitter pill to the travelled French girl ; she sees these foreign girls going about in Paris exactly as she herself desires to go about ; she knows that her own people accept them as ladies, but will not accept her if she dare to imitate them ; and she has already tasted across the Channel the sweet and perfectly innocent freedom which is now denied her.

I should like to think that these good French girls are soon to be on *The Doorstep* ; about to share in all the innocent life of their English-speaking friends ; but I fear the emancipation is not to be in their time. Nevertheless, the longing has been awakened, and their children, or their children's children, may, entering into the kingdom, arise up and call them blessed.



LE MOULIN ROUGE

XV

PARIS, *January 1907.*

ON the eve of leaving Paris, I regret to say I have been losing some valuable slumber and a few gold pieces in what is supposed to be "seeing life." To see it one has to go out late of an evening, and not come

home till morning. To the French people it appears to be very amusing ; to me, most of it was inexpressibly dull. I have been personally conducted by bona-fide young French students to their midnight haunts of Montmartre and the Latin Quarter. I have heard the singers of the *Cabarets*, and seen the dancers of the *Bal Épatant*. The brightness and the gaiety were well sustained by the numerous mirrors and the electric lights ; but the people and the performances were no better and no worse than may be found at home in Glasgow music-halls and dancing clubs. Possibly the wise student knows to a nicety how much he dare show to his senior ; and when I chaffed Alphonse about the peaceful evenings he had given me, he made some dark references to real student orgies, managed by themselves to which it was impossible to introduce the curious Briton.

“If I could only take you to our annual ball,” said Alphonse, “it would open your eyes ;

ce n'est pas un bal blanc, c'est une cochonnerie ;
men behave like pigs."

"Oh! fine ham!" I retorted, but I fear the doric argot was lost upon him.

At the *Bal Épatant*, the custom of soberly attired elderly people (such as myself) is to sit at little round tables drinking coffee or beer, and to watch the dancers. There was a good orchestra and a good dancing floor, on which a number of young men, who looked like drapers' assistants or city clerks, were gravely waltzing with an equal number of young women who appeared to be their sweethearts. We had just come from the *Théâtre Français*, where, in the odour of respectability, surrounded by the British matron and her daughters, we had listened to two disagreeable problem plays. I kept arguing with my brave Prince Hal that the young people of the *Bal Épatant* were having more innocent pastime than a problem play. He did not like this, and seemed to

think that I was not satisfied with the height or the age of the time I was having. He explained that the fun was fiercest on Thursdays and Saturdays, and depended upon the class of visitor and the degree of his or her intoxication. We had had the misfortune to strike a particularly uninteresting evening.

Another evening we gave to the *Cabarets* of Montmartre, which are to be found on every side of the *Place Pigale*, where *Le Rat Mort* keeps open house all night long. In these *Cabarets* you pay from one to three francs for your drink and entertainment. The drink is usually a tumbler of hot coffee, and at the best of the *Cabarets* you sit beside apparently well-to-do Frenchmen and their wives, listening to comic songs sung by the authors themselves; or to stump speeches and humorous descriptions of little shadow-shows. So far as I can make out the jokes which the French people enjoy are of two kinds. There are the little absurdities

made familiar to us by Goldsmith in his famous elegies *On Mrs Mary Blaize*, and *On the Death of a Mad Dog*. When Goldsmith wrote—

“The King himself has followed her
When she has walked before”

he was imitating the ancient classic absurdity
Chanson sur le fameux La Pallisse :

“On dit que dans ses amours,
Il fut caressé des belles
Qui le suivirent toujours
Tant qu’il marcha devant elles.”

Little pleasantries of this order are very popular at these *Cabaret* concerts. “O bring me a cup of cold water,” sang one of our authors, “but see that you bring it me boiling.” And this provoked broad smiles; but I admit that something is lost by translation.

The other type of humour is peculiarly French, and is difficult for us to comprehend or explain. The French language can so smartly and deftly hover round naughtiness that even to the British mind—almost to the Noncon-

formist conscience—the phrase may pass with a shrug and a smile. Translate it into English, and then—oh, no, you must not mention it. At these *Cabarets* there is a superfluity of this naughtiness which seems to be the most enjoyable thing in the world to the French people; and such are the places to offer a happy evening, the Parisians think.

To this gay life, so-called, we give without regret, a long, a last farewell; but it is not so easy to say good-bye to the fair good life of Paris—to our friends of the Quarter, to the Boulevards, to *La Sainte-Chapelle*, and to the dear Venus of Milo. We shall pay our final p.p.c. call upon the Milesian lady when we pass through Paris again on the homeward journey. We had her gracious parting smile, although circumstances over which she has no control forbade the shaking of hands.

Thérèse and Hedwige, however, who are not made of marble, made amends by the warmth

and sincerity of their farewells. I have not been saying much about Hedwige and Thérèse: I have been keeping them to myself. Now that we are going away from them, I am realising that perhaps they are the best of our discoveries: they are not mentioned by Baedeker, and yet, Paris has had nothing sweeter or fairer to show to us.

Thérèse and Hedwige are schoolgirls, still in the short skirt and long hair period; inseparable friends, and yet, in their outlook upon life, as opposite as the poles. One an impassioned revolutionary, almost willing herself, in the cause of the wretched and down-trodden, to bombard the oppressors; the other more conservative, with a radiant enthusiasm for justice, forbearance and love, that fairly

“Stirs the blood in an old man’s heart,
And makes his pulses fly.”

We got to know the parents of these children when we lived in the Latin Quarter, and O what

times we have had, squatting upon hearth-rugs,
listening to these young and eager philosophers
as they

“reason’d high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fix’d fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute ;
And found no end, in wand’ring mazes lost.”

During the course of an otherwise common-place career, the genus “small girl” has been my most fascinating hobby. I have studied and observed many varieties, and in rash moods—such as the present—I pride myself in having as good a grip of the subject as Lewis Carroll had. These two little French girls are the rarest specimens of my collection in the matter of extraordinary intellectual development. Withal they have no trace of the blue-stocking ; with their marvellous stores of knowledge and boundless appetites for more, they still are merry-hearted girls, with mischief on the twinkle. What they need most at present is a year at St. Andrews, for a serious course of tennis,

hockey, and golf—subjects not yet included in their French curriculum. As a New-Year card we sent them each a copy of *The Pocket R. L. S.*, and here is a portion of the actual acknowledgment in its delightfully broken English—

"It is really TOO nice!

"Just on the moment I received your lovely little book, dear Mr Rowley, I rushed like a motor-car on my pen to thank you, thank you, thank you again and again.

"I have an overweight of joy, and, pray, let me pour it. I am perfectly stupid, but it doesn't matter. Does it?

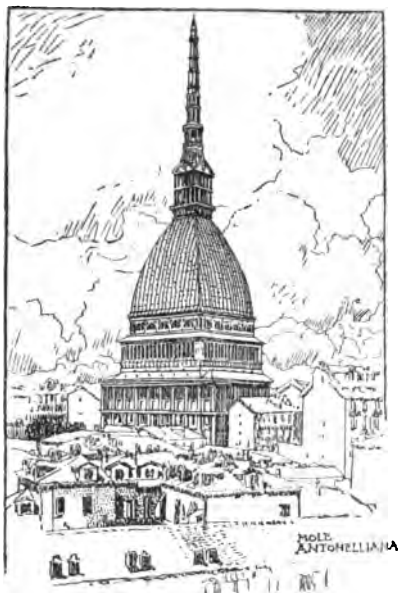
"It is really too nice: I can't do otherwise than to repeat it. This little book of dear Stevenson shall be a companion to me, and as you say it will remember to me our delicious, foolish 'causeries.' I think that I haven't done anything but to say stupidities all time long: but, anywise my conclusions of this very pro-

found theological discussions are that life is really delicious to live, that Christmas and New-Year times are the best of all (for the present moment), and that I do love you, dear Mr Rowley, if you admit it, and if you admit it not, just the same!"

Ah! dear Hedwige and Thérèse, I admit it, and return it to you from the bottom of my heart. I admit it again, and exult in it and sing :

"Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your net, put *that* in."

Here has been the brightest side of Paris for us, the life worth seeing and knowing in the heart, and hearts of the Latin Quarter.



XVI

TURIN,
January 1907.

A GREAT railway station, especially if it be also a great junction—is one of the best places on earth to see life. I suppose Clapham Junction must be considered in the first rank of importance and complexity; time was when Rugby was famous in comic song and Christmas

story ; but surely Paris itself may claim, in a perfectly true sense, to be the great junction of the travelling world. All day an endless crowd arrives from everywhere, to change for anywhere ; and if you cannot make out what the porters are calling, it is probably : "*Descendez pour les Pôles et l'Equateur.*" Three of the great stations, now fairly familiar to us, are huge international labyrinths, where the "way out" has to be indicated in many languages. We have waited for friends at these stations at all hours of the day and night ; and even when trains were long delayed, we never wearied ; there was always the stir of interesting life around us. The very porter's barrows were piled with romance ; gun-cases, pith helmets, skis and alpenstocks ; trunks and boxes for Bombay and Biskra ; and now and again one's breath would be caught, and the heart cease to beat, at the passing glimpse of a bag of golf clubs !

If this dead matter of goods and chattels

could so move us, how much more the living spirit unconsciously betraying its little tragedies or comedies in welcomes and farewells. We joined the moving throng ourselves two days ago, but having no one saying good-bye to us, we managed to maintain the appearance of outward calm. Not so a little French governess in our compartment, whose parents were bidding her adieu. When it was all over, and Mademoiselle began to recover and re-arrange herself with the help of a tiny round box, containing a mirror and—what-not, I believe she was thinking she must have made “a perfect fright” of herself by this little burst of emotion. I would have liked so much to assure her that she was mistaken, that she could never look more beautiful and charming than through the smiles and tears she was giving to her mother. So *Huldy* looked when *Zekle's* heart went pity pat, and he with unerring vision declared it kingdom-come to look at her :

"All kin' o' smily round the lips,
And teary round the lashes."

And so Russell Lowell kept company with me through the bump and rattle of a sleepless night; and on the morning we tore up and down through the *Mont Cenis* tunnel, and slipped into Turin after a railway ride of seventeen hours. The *Mont Cenis* route into Italy is not so varied and interesting as the *St. Gotthard*, but it is more impressive. So it seemed to us seen under a cloudless sky of intense blue, with the great mountain peaks, ice-bound or snow-clad, glittering in the sun.

We are resting for a day or two in Turin, which in many ways is a welcome change from the activities of Paris. Here, for example, there are no signs of the tourist, and no obvious lure for ensnaring him. In Paris many of the shopkeepers go out into the streets and by-ways and compel the tourist to come in. In Turin we have not seen one intimation to the effect

that *English is spoken here*. You find that everywhere in Paris, often supplemented by persuasive notices to come in and buy. I saw in a confectioner's shop in Paris the following printed notices: *Our English visitors are cordially invited to enter and taste our wholesome sweetmeats*; and on another card: *Our American friends are asked to walk right in and sample our elegant candies*. There is nothing of this kind in Turin; we seem to have the whole city to ourselves, and no one asks what else we may be wanting.

Turin is the capital of Piedmont—a most beautiful name to give to this part of Italy, which is at “the foot of the mountains.” It has also other capital reasons for being considered a great Capital of the world, which the curious can discover for themselves in history books. What I have discovered for myself is that the various rulers of this city have ruled it carefully and well. It is the most

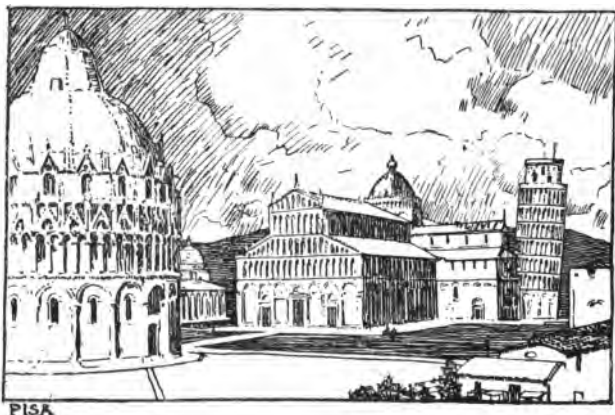
rectangular arrangement of streets and squares I have ever seen ; chess, or even halma, might be played upon a map of the city. This is its most striking characteristic to the stranger. After that, one is impressed by the near presence of the Alps and the Apennines. You gaze along one of these street vistas, and at the far end you are startled to find the way blocked by some towering cloud-capped mountain. Again and again this has surprised us, and even solemnised us to thoughts of "French," not of the foreigner, but the "faithful French" of Stevenson's old precentor—

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes."

The third charm of Turin to us has been its arcaded squares and streets, and the lofty arches through which the streets pass from the squares. These give the city to our eyes a foreign, and yet extremely dignified appearance, and add to it a picturesqueness which other-

wise might have been lost in the monotonous straight lines of the general plan.

One other dominating feature of Turin has to be mentioned. There is a curious freak of a building called the *Mole Antonelliana*, begun in 1863 by M. Antonelli, and intended for a synagogue. The city has since completed it, and will fit it up for a public museum. It is a large square building resembling a tower, over which rises a dome-like roof, and up from that springs a spire, with various lighthouse-looking galleries to the enormous height of 536 feet. This spire presides over Turin, very much as the Eiffel Tower does over Paris. There are 1024 steps to be taken to reach the uppermost gallery, but from half that height we were satisfied with the view of the mountains, and the curious squared look of the city. And so, after squaring the door-keeper, we returned to our hotel, which is a square block in one of the great squares, where we wound up the day appropriately with a good square meal!



XVII

PISA, *January* 1907.

WE are jogging along, pilgrim-wise, to Rome. We left Turin frost-bound, with the university students carrying skates with their note-books; but here in Pisa, my wife has to use her sun-shade, while I am being tempted to disregard proverbial wisdom and cast a clout or two in January. It is a notable journey from Turin to Pisa: a portion of the way—the stretch from Genoa to Spezzia is one

of the most beautiful railway rides in the world, and also one of the most tantalising. Years ago, when we had less leisure and more money to spend, we rushed over this track at first-class express speed. The train went darting from tunnel to tunnel; on one side we got glimpses of vine-clad mountains, with old villages creeping up the clefts of the rocks; and on the other, rapid blinks of the blue Mediterranean rolling white on the beach. Again and again we would cry out: "How lo——"! but before we had time to say "lovely" we would be plunged into gross darkness, and bad language. The years have brought wisdom, inasmuch as they have taught us to hasten more slowly. This time we travelled with a cheaper ticket, and by an omnibus train. Many of the stopping places stop short at the mouth of a tunnel, and there we had time given us to look down upon the yellow sands, and the fisher folk; or, on the other side of the line, to the towers perched

upon hill-tops, and the terraces of vines. For less money than we formerly paid, we were having a much more brilliant, and satisfactory panorama.

Pisa is looking older and more picturesque than ever. It is one of the unspoilt ancient cities of Italy. Within its walls there is no sign of a modern building, no tramways, hardly ever a motor. The old palaces of the Pisan nobles are all there, looking like palaces still, although most of them are turned into workshops and factories where the men make mirrors, and the women weave cotton. As they go to and fro, the Pisans do not completely spoil the look of their picturesque town—as the people of Nuremberg do—by wearing the latest slop reproduction of London and Paris fashion. Many of the men are wearing overcoats of strong croton brown colour, and others of a rich terra-cotta red ; and the poorer women enrich the picture with their simple and brilliant head-

gear, the cotton handkerchief. We often stop to admire the groups of women and girls at the public fountains, and their altogether fetching water-pots. The pots for carrying water, are almost all of copper with little brass taps and lids; they look so business-like, and yet so beautiful in their form and proportions, rounded and buxom as the fairest of their carriers. The poorest people appear to have them, probably handed down from generation to generation. My great regret is to be leaving Pisa without carrying away one for myself.

Life, to the poor Italian woman, when she is not weaving cotton, or carrying water, or bearing children, appears to be one long washing day; and yet, to judge from the merriment and chatter of the women who seem to be constantly kneeling on the river banks, to wash clothes all day must be a picnic, and great fun.

The river Arno takes a bend of half a circle

K

through the centre of Pisa, and most of the streets—so unlike the straight ones of Turin—have a winding track like the river's. They are usually flagged across from house to house, giving the suggestion—not of a street as we know it, but of a wide pavement. Until one gets used to it, it is rather alarming to find horses and carriages suddenly turning a corner and careering over what appears to be the sacred footpath, and drawing up at a door-step. However, the traffic is not dangerous; the approaching cart or carriage is well heard before it is seen. These Pisa streets form the most delightful "maze"; the stranger within the gates cannot play a finer game than to dive into this maze and see what luck may send him. He cannot very well lose himself; Pisa is not big enough for that; and there is always the river, or the city wall to run against, or the great square of the Duomo, with its most wonderful group of buildings, the

Cathedral, the Baptistery, the leaning Tower, and the Campo Santo. For a third and a fourth time we returned to this central point from which everything in Pisa is measured. We gazed at the tower again, but did not ascend it this time. "We are just in time to see it," I said to Mona, "it is going to fall now : there it goes !" It didn't, but that expresses the sensation every one has, who sees it for the first time, or after a long interval. We renewed our tipping acquaintance with the old keeper of the Baptistery, who, with the aid of the marvellous echoes of the dome, gave us again his famous imitation of an organ—that is his modest description of the performance. He stands at a certain point on the floor beneath the dome, and, with a peculiar vibrating hum, sends forth the intervals of the scale. They are the tremulous notes of an old man's voice, but it is enough that they ring true ; for back from the dome come

the solemn harmonies as of Cherubim and Seraphim, or of some great choir invisible.

At one corner of this Piazza, under the shadow of these old buildings, there are sculptors' studios and workshops with scores of talented young Italians chiselling reproductions of Venuses, and Apollos, and Psyches, and little models of the leaning Tower. They do wonderful work; the old artistic temperament is theirs, and with it they are supplying the demand of their day and generation. The little models will adorn the home mantelpieces of the British and American tourist. I do not mean to infer that theirs is ignoble art—far from it; nevertheless, it is pathetic to compare the aim and achievement of these men of to-day with that of their ancestors, who carved the great pulpit in the Baptistery, and the rare columns of the Cathedral and the Campanile.

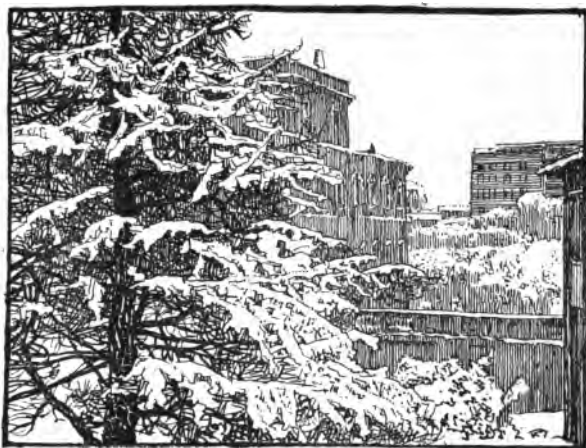
In our last stroll through the town two

things happened to be recorded on the tablets of our memory. A funeral procession passed by, evidently of some humble person, and yet with a degree of impressive pomp and ceremony we have not hitherto seen at home or abroad. Black banners and other emblems were borne in front of the hearse, and behind it escorting the mourners, walked a number of brown-robed, bare-headed monks, carrying torches aflame and chanting a "miserere."

The other thing we ought to have known, and may once have known and forgotten; but as it came to us this time with the freshness of an original discovery we can never forget it again. From the maze of narrow streets we slipped through an archway, and found ourselves by the river side on the Lung Arno Galileo, near to the house where Galileo was born. That of itself was interesting enough; but right before us was a marble tablet informing us that there in that house lived Percy

Bysshe Shelley, and there was written the immortal *Adonais*. I cannot explain why a gasp and a thrill should come over me at the sight ; but it did. Probably the house brought the man suddenly a degree nearer than he had ever been before ; and I was feeling a little of Browning's mood when he penned the *Memorabilia* :

“ Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems, and new ! ”



THE BARBERINI PALACE

XVIII

ROME, *January* 1907.

WE are in Rome at last, and have set our feet on the Forum. We arrived during a heavy snow-fall : Rome might have been in Ross-shire. The snow was lying ; and possibly our landlord, too, when he assured us that he had seen nothing like it in his time. The hotel servants were smiling and clapping their hands

and crying "*Bello, bello!*" as they drew our attention to the snow-covered roofs and trees. Cedars and palm trees, orange trees and lemon trees with the fruit upon them and all enveloped in snow. The startling novelty to them, was a bleak enough prospect for us; this is to be wintering in Rome, with a vengeance. From our windows we could see the Roman boys throwing what was doubtless the first snowballs of their lives; doing it as to the manner born, with a sure and certain aim at the shop girls. In a neighbouring square a man was amusing himself and the crowd, by modelling a snow-woman; a rare achievement for a Roman sculptor.

After the snow came a few days of torrential rain: Rome might have been in Renfrewshire. We were kept indoors for two whole days nursing our wrath and a desperate cold. Since then the weather has been improving and we are beginning to go about and see things; pictures,

sculptures, palaces, churches, and the like ; but before detailing any sights, I must make clear our coign of vantage.

We came charged with many a hint and wrinkle from former pilgrims as to where and how to live in the Eternal City of seven hills. For health's sake, we had been warned, it was imperative that we select to live high up on one of the seven hills. We considered them all and in the train from Pisa reduced the list to a short leet of two : it lay between the *Pincio* and the *Quirinale*. The *Pincio*, which is really not one of the sacred seven, but is a kind of secular hill where the band plays, had a slight advantage in the matter of height ; but there was a cramping suggestion in the name which repelled me. The word *Quirinale*, however, quite suited my whimsy, and if it was a little lower than the *Pincio*, so were its hotel charges. We have pitched our tent ; we are now fixed up on the *Quirinale*, just round the corner

from where the King lives. A quarter that is good enough for a king is good enough for me. And then, consider the delectable, refreshing name of "our street" on the *Quirinale*; it is called the street or way of the Four Fountains—that of itself is worth at least from ten to fifteen francs a month. There is not a street-name to touch it on all the *Pincio*, or any other height, or hollow of Rome.

Quite recently we bade good-bye to some good Americans in Paris, who, in giving us a note of their home address, extolled the New York system of naming, or rather, numbering the streets. Far be it from me to decry utility, but to have one's friends numbered and pigeon-holed in this fashion is not attractive to me. The address, if I remember aright, is 36 *West 56th Street*; I have it somewhere in my notebook, entered in the cash columns; but there is no pleasant association of ideas, between my friends and this dry formula, which reads, I think,



THE FORUM

56 *West 36th Street* ; if I lose that note-book, I am lost ! How much happier for me if my dream were to hunt them up some day in their own home situate in the terrace of the Two Lovers ; or in the crescent of the Three Graces ; or in a street named like this one in Rome, the way of the Four Fountains. For addresses such as these, no note-book would be needed ; only the tablets of one's heart and memory.

We have commenced our wanderings up and down the seven hills of Rome. We are busy making observations, and good resolutions. One of the things I resolve to do on my return is to make a fresh and vigorous attack upon Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. To be seeing so much and recognising so little is a bitter mortification to the spirit ; and yet, I am hoping that this experience may add the little glitter of romance and poetry which Gibbon's History has hitherto lacked for me. My visions of Rome, like many another man's, are those

which were received in boyhood ; not from the study of history books and commentaries, but from the stirring lines of Lord Macaulay telling :

“How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.”

Better stuff than that, to suit the craving of the natural boy, has not been written. I have never met in a book the pirate, or highwayman, or Indian chief with the nerve to challenge Horatius. To-day we stood upon Hadrian's bridge, and looking down upon the troubled and disappointing face of Father Tiber,

“To whom the Romans pray,”

I harangued him with all the verses of Macaulay I could muster. There was only Father Tiber ; not a sign anywhere of his valiant sons ; no tomb of Horatius is named in the guide-books.

One of these days, I propose to visit the actual grave of another hero, renowned in verse
“Above all Greek, above all Roman fame,” and

when I read the inscription on his tombstone : *Here lies one whose name was writ in water*, I shall recognise it, and know that I have found my hero's resting-place. There is no need to read up about John Keats, as at present I continually have to do with men like M. Furius Camillus, Vettius Agorius Prætextutus, and a host of their friends, Romans, and countrymen. In wandering about Rome, the lover of Poetry occasionally scores ; but as a general rule, the student of History is cock of the walk. Our first visit to the Pantheon is a case in point ; it is the one ancient edifice in Rome which is still in perfect preservation ; and there my ignorance made me cross for a whole afternoon. There is this extenuating circumstance, that to us, the visit was a surprise one. By chance, we discovered it, and entered ; the Pantheon received us before we were ready to receive the Pantheon : we had not consulted beforehand the Leipzig oracle of the crimson cover. It is an impres-

sive building, curiously lit by one great aperture in the dome ; open to the heavens, and, on the day of our visit, to bitter blasts of *Janwar' win'*. The place was cold as a vault, and here were tombs upon tombs. King Victor Emmanuel, "the honest king," is buried here ; and opposite his magnificent resting-place is the equally splendid tomb of the assassinated King Humbert. These royal sepulchres are always covered with wreaths, and at each of them there is a visitors' book, in charge of an attendant. We quietly stole away, chilled a little by these attributes

"to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of Kings."

and quite unaware at the time that close beside them lay the dust of one who, more than Pope or King, has brought praise and honour and glory to Italy. We must return to the Pantheon to do homage at the grave of Raphael Santi, *Prince of Painters*.



KEATS'S GRAVE

XIX

ROME, *January 1907.*

WE have been living in the open air for a few days, actually getting a touch of sun-tan. In fine weather, even St. Peter's is dwarfed by the blue dome above it; and the oldest monuments of ancient Rome rest "under the wide and starry sky." We have explored the Forum, the Palatine Hill, and the Appian way. If you want to receive and retain a confused idea of what the Forum once

was, you had better take a guide, who will name you many Roman Emperors and Pagan deities. He will also point out to you a few places where Palaces and Temples undoubtedly stood ; and many another where they were supposed to stand. There are men guides and women guides ; and when you have skillfully eluded these, the uniformed care-takers surprise and capture you and lead you where they will. These care-takers do the job for a trifle ; I fear the professional guides must regard them as "black-legs." For my part, I would willingly pay the modest tip to be left severely alone. Arnold, in his journal, has said all there is to be said for me : "What the fragments of pillars belonged to, perhaps we can never know ; but that I think matters little. I care not whether it was a temple of Jupiter Stator or the Basilica Julia, but one knows that one is on the ground of the Forum, under the Capitol, the place where the tribes

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assembled and the orators spoke: the scene, in short, of all the internal struggles of the Roman people."

The care-takers appear to hunt in well-trained packs. When one accosts you politely in Italian, and you shunt him off by smiling and shaking your head; at the next turn another will try you with French or English, and before you know where you are, you are in his grip. I have thought of a plan to foil them all in future; I shall meet their advances with a mysterious shake of the head and a few words of primitive Celtic or Gaelic.

But even under the greater dome, and in the open campagna beyond the city walls, there is no getting away from tombs and graves of the martyrs; pyramid of Cestius, round tower of Metella, and the Christian catacombs. All are equally amazing and must be visited. I am beginning to understand the tremendous fascination Rome must have had

for Nathaniel Hawthorne's imaginative mind. If the most matter-of-fact tourist be moved by these things, how they must have possessed and overwhelmed the author of *Transformation*, and *Mosses from an Old Manse*!

The pyramid is the strangest, most forlorn-looking monument of Rome, as if it had strayed from its own tribe in Egypt, and lost its way, and settled down here in despair. Now it is firmly fixed, for the city wall abuts on it and will not let it go. Returning from our country walk, we rested against the pyramid waiting for our tram-car, and mused upon Cestius. So Tennyson in a similar mood dreamed of *Godiva*, as he waited for the train at Coventry. No Pegasus was hitched to our car, however; it worked on the overhead principle; and I can only say a few words about Cestius in halting prose.

Caius Cestius Poplicius, prætor and tribune of the people, died about B.C. 30, and in

accordance with his will, of which Agrippa was executor, this tomb was built for him, in 330 days. Information to this effect is recorded in large letters on the Pyramid itself; but I need hardly point out that the sculptor was but mortal, and being neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, the letters B.C. do not occur in his inscription. That is about all I have learned of Cestius. One half of his pyramid stands outside the city wall on the road to Ostia, and must have met the calm gaze of Saint Paul as he passed that way to martyrdom. The other half of the pyramid rests in the old Protestant Cemetery; and to reach it, we had to walk round the high wall to the cemetery gate. We chanced to look through an iron-barred slit in the wall which faces the pyramid, and there, a few yards from us, were two small and very modest tomb-stones, such as country folk at home might put up for their people in Traquair

Kirk-yard. On one of them there is no name, but every word can be read by the passer-by on the roadway. It runs :—

“This grave contains all that was mortal of a young English poet, who on his death-bed, in the bitterness of his heart at the malicious power of his enemies, desired these words to be engraven on his tombstone : *Here lies one whose name was writ in water.* February 24th, 1821.”

Sunday, then, is the anniversary of his death, and we must go there again, where

“ . . . gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand ;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble, and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven’s smile their camp of death
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.”

It makes a curious contrast, Caius Cestius desiring his name to be graven on marble :

Keats, his to be writ in water. Will the poems outlast the pyramid ?

Close to the old cemetery, is the new Burial-ground ; one of the loveliest of God's-acres on earth, shaded by cypresses and carpeted by violets ; and absolutely free from the ghastly tawdry decorations of the common Continental graveyard. Here lies the dust of Shelley ; and that also of his friend Trelawney, who, before he died, added the lines from *Ariel's* song to Shelley's tomb-stone—lines much loved by the poet :

“ Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange.”

Here also lie William and Mary Howitt ; Gibson, the sculptor ; John Addington Symonds ; Goethe's son ; and the school-boy's modern *Homer*, R. M. Ballantyne.

“ Such graves as these are pilgrim shrines,
Shrines to no code or creed confined—
The Delphian vales, the Palestines,
The Meccas of the mind.”

We must return for a moment to Saint Paul : it is impossible in Rome to get off the track of the two great apostles. Under one church we have been shown over the house of the Centurion with whom Paul lodged. There is a fountain there which (they say) sprang up at the prayer of St. Paul that he might have the wherewithal to baptise his Roman converts. Under another, we have been shown the prison where Peter and Paul were bound to a pillar for nine months : they show you the pillar. Here, too, is a miraculous fountain which provided the water (they say) for the baptism of the gaolers. And at the place now called the Three Fountains, where Paul was beheaded, about two miles beyond the gates of the city, three churches have been erected. In one of them you may see the pillar to which it is said he was bound, the block upon which he is supposed to have been beheaded, and the three fountains which (they say) sprang forth wherever the

severed head struck the earth during the three bounds which it made after decapitation. In support of this story, it is asserted that the water of the first of these fountains is still warm, of the second tepid, of the third cold. We did not test them ; that Paul suffered and died near here was solemnising truth enough for us ; these superstitions only detract from the solemnity. This day's experience has recalled Will Carleton's rhyme of *Our Travelled Parson* ; and has also faintly stirred within me an old and slumbering Sunday School superintendent. "By George!" said I to the superintendent, "what a thrilling account you could have given of this to your senior lads and girls!" The superintendent hummed and hawed for a moment ; then quietly went to sleep again.



XX

ROME, *February* 1907.

AFTER a week or ten days of strenuous sight-seeing, flesh and spirit rebel and cry out : " Rome is too much, we must get away from here as quickly as possible ;" but at the end of the third week, when mind and body have learned to attempt less—and accomplish more—the desire is to stay in Rome for ever.

"See Naples, and then die," is the proud boast of the Neapolitan ; but the Roman has surely the right to say as much, or even more, of his city. See Rome, and then die, if you must ; but do your best to get back again as soon as you can : the Eternal City seems to call for the eternal life.

When we discovered the Coliseum, and the Church of St. Peter's, the one in ruins, and the other surmounted by the familiar dome, I remarked to Mona how like they were to their photographs ; and yet the impression which they themselves now make upon us is so different and so much more profound—a difference similar to what exists between the picture, and the presence, of one's dearest friend.

We have seen the Coliseum in bright sunlight, and have had its brutal intricacies explained to us with the help of a wooden model and an intelligent guide. I am perhaps misplacing adjectives in this statement, but we give the

guide the benefit of the doubt. We have also visited the arena by the pale moonlight, a more witching hour to dream dreams, and see visions of what took place here centuries ago. Visions such as Charles Dickens conjured up when he saw the Coliseum ; of thousand of eager faces staring down into this very arena, at a whirl of strife, and blood, and dust which no language can describe.

We have also been several times to St. Peter's, taking long quiet walks in the interior ; and again at service on Candlemas day, when we stood still and saw the procession of choir and clergy pass up and down the centre of the nave ; the clergy carrying lighted candles, and the choir singing a *Te Deum*. It made a curious study, such a crowd of all sorts and conditions of priests in procession, many of them tottering, old, old men with uncouth types of faces such as William Strang loves to draw. A few of the greater dignitaries were noble-

looking men ; but, for the majority, we could only breathe the pious hope that they might be better than they were bonnie. Gorgeous apparel, if they only knew it, availeth little in the long absence of a clean shave.

The vastness of the interior of St. Peter's, as has been often remarked, does not at first impress one ; everything, from dome to decorative detail, is carried through in the same grand scale. Men, however, look pigmies ; and in vain you try to conceive a standard of mankind that would harmonise with the immensity of the building. If elders of 5 feet 10, and 13 stone, are admissible in a *Wee Free* church, what is the correct height and weight required of worshippers for St. Peter's ? It looks an easy sum in compound proportion, but I cannot work it out. Take St. Peter's dome for example ; it is supported by four stone piers that seem to be all that is demanded by such a dome ; no one would guess them to be the

monsters they really are. At the back of one of the Four Fountains, from which our street takes its name, there are two buildings, the church and the convent of St. Carlo. It is a small church, as churches go in Rome, but considerably larger than the average *Wee Free* at home. I have paced the side wall of the convent and it took 64 of my 34 to 36 inch strides. This church and convent taken together, correspond in area with one of the stone piers which support St. Peter's cupola! There are many head and hair-splitting facts of this order lying in wait for the unsophisticated traveller; but for St. Peter's sake, let one, and one only suffice. It is best simply to come under the spell of its grandeur, and to apprehend Goethe's verdict upon St. Peter's—"that art as well as nature can set aside every standard of measurement."

Besides the imposing architecture, and impressive ceremony, many a curious side-show

goes on within St. Peter's. There is the famous statue of the Saint himself, extending his toe with the fine impartiality of bronze, for the devout kisses of good Catholics, or the simpering lip-service of bad Protestants. We often hang around this pillar of the church to watch the changing scenes. Simple country people step forward and kiss the toe, and hold up their little children to do likewise. A tall, handsome ecclesiastic follows them ; theirs was a clumsy, awkward proceeding, but this man goes through the ceremony as Henry Irving might have done it on the stage of the Lyceum. Then, when the coast seems clear, two young English girls make a dash and do it, and hurry off ; and following them a tweed-suited tourist performs, and returns to his wife, with a grin. Woe is me ! by his speech I recognise him to be my countryman. I know what the wretch means to make of this when he gets home ; he will recount his heroic achievement

in the lime-light of a lantern show ; or make it one of his funny stories for the Sunday School soiree !

We have been going to church a good deal ; even more than we did in Paris. There are about eighty churches in Rome dedicated to St. Mary alone ; the Apostles have a great many among them ; and every Saint we have read about has one or more ; and so has many another Saint of whose existence we were quite unaware. The most insignificant church appears to contain some relic, or picture, or sculpture of rare merit or historical interest which "the visitor certainly ought not to miss." It has taken us three weeks to escape from the bondage of the guide-books, and to go to whatever churches we please. I went into a little one to-day which is not mentioned in Baedeker or in Hare's "Walks in Rome." I found the altar guarded from the congregation by a tall wrought-iron screen. Within this screen four

nuns in white were kneeling in front of the altar, a living picture. While I waited there a bell struck the hour, and on the last stroke four others entered, deeply veiled, and sentry-wise, relieved their sisters. On inquiry I found this to be the *Santa Croce* Church of the Blue Nuns. Their robes are of a beautiful light blue shade, and were covered, when I saw them, by their long pure white veils. Here in this church they hold "perpetual adoration"; night and day relays of nuns keep kneeling before the altar. Each day, at sunset, the *Ave Maria* is sung, and more sweetly than at the well-known *San. Trinità de' Monti*, to which the fashionable crowds all congregate after listening to the band in the Pincian Gardens. "Perpetual Adoration" may seem a strange and foreign idea to the Reformed Churches of my fathers which are open, as a rule, on Sundays only; but church members might profit by taking their turns at it, or something like it.

In time, it might take the place of "perpetual squabbling," which has so long been a prominent feature in our Scottish Presbyterian ritual.

The more genial weather has come, and we are promising ourselves to be "off" churches for a few days. We shall be "blue-domers" for a week, if the heavens permit. We want to discover for ourselves the beauties of the Italian *Villa* to which Mr Maxfield Parrish first drew our attention in his beautifully coloured prints. The *Villa* of Italy is not the house, as we have it at home. The term applies to the estate or country garden of the wealthy ; the house upon it is called the *Casino*. The great princely families, Barberini, Doria, Borghese, etc., etc., all have or had, their *villas* beyond the walls, as well as their palaces in Rome. We must walk in these veritable Italian gardens, and get a few tips for our own broad half-acre at home.

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XXI

ROME, *February* 1907.

WE are in love with the Italian Villa ; we have inspected a few of the famous country seats that belonged to Emperor, Prince, or Patrician ; and have picked up a wrinkle or two for the embellishment of the plots and borders that abut on our own kail-yard. The Villa Borghese is just outside the gates of Rome, and is now a public park and pleasure

ground for the people. The Borghese family, after 400 years of almost regal splendour, speculated in modern house-building, ruined themselves, and had to sell their Villa to the State. That is bad enough, but here is a worse thing, for which the State or the family is responsible: all the sarcophagi, marble benches, etc., which till recently enriched the garden paths, and even the splendid terrace wall with its fountains, that ran in front of the Casino, have been removed to England to glorify a millionaire's garden near Maidenhead. On its old site, it is true, the terrace has been replaced by a copy, but it was a terrible blunder to let the original go. However, needs must, when the speculator drives, and who knows but in a century or two the unprotected Briton may lose the terrace fronts of Hatfield, or of Windsor itself, and see them go to adorn the "yard" of a packer King in Chicago.

We saw the Borghese grounds on a holiday—

a Roman holiday, with crowds of happy children picnicking on the grass ; and in a lovely arena, so different from the gladiatorial times, young men's associations were at their games of ball. It was an ordinary Sunday, but the games were to the players ; there were no crowds looking on and shouting, and that goes a long way to make football a passable Sunday game. Their vigorous play, plus their youth, was doubtless a fair equivalent to my quiet Sunday stroll.

We saw some other young men playing a curious variation or prolongation of our tennis game. The balls used were of solid indiarubber, heavy and bouncing ; not so large as a cricket-ball, but bigger than a golf-ball. The players stood, I should say, from 80 to 100 yards apart, possibly more ; and with stout tambourines held firmly in the right hand they banged the balls to and fro. The skill of the players in getting at the flying ball before it touched the ground

and returning it with the full force of body, ball, and tambourine, was almost incredible ; the ball soaring through the air like a very long mashie shot or an old man's drive. I could not discover how the score was kept, but the game was interesting to watch ; besides, the presence of the tambourines lent a special Sunday grace or dispensation to the players.

It is better to visit the Borghese on a quiet forenoon and people it yourself from your imagination. Here are the bits of classic landscape, the garden walks, the groves which Alma Tadema and Frederick Leighton loved to paint. Here are the ancient ilex trees, the stone pines with their long slender stems running up to a dense clump of branches and verdure, and most impressive of all and strangest to our eyes, the avenues of cypress. We saw the procession of the *Daphnephoria*—in our mind's eye ; and wondered why the community of Roman artists do not revive these living pictures when they

have the ideal climate and the perfect *mise-en-scène* for the purpose. How the Villa Borghese would delight the hearts of the projectors of our home pastoral plays!

The largest and pleasantest district of the Villa order lies just beyond the *Porta S. Pancrazio*, and is the property of the Prince Doria, who owns the famous Velasquez portrait of Pope Innocent X. He appears to be a prince of good fellows, for he throws the place open to the public twice a week. If you own a private carriage, or care to go the length of a two-horse hire, you can have one of the loveliest drives in the world; through the Villa grounds, and back to Rome across the hill *Janiculum*, where you have the whole of Rome at your feet. Here is another *Darien peak*, we said; the name we give to our most memorable prospects.

We were not allowed to enter the Villa garden, but we could look down upon it, and

admire the clipped box borders, and the fantastic patterns of the flower beds, and the rich colour of the camellias already in bloom. A regular fairy or story-book garden ; and on the top of these great possessions, O happy, happy prince, there is an excellent private golf course of eighteen holes !

To get a faint conception of what a Roman Emperor of the olden time could do in the way of a Villa, you have to take the Tivoli tram or train and see the ruins of Hadrian's Villa. As ruins, one can only remark that they are extremely picturesque and ruinous ; but it is impossible to tell with certainty where the palace stood, or this temple and that circus. Here, however, was reared the "stately pleasure dome" decreed by Hadrian. It was, the historians inform us, as large as a city ; and gathered round the emperor's palace were gardens, fountains, groves, colonnades, shady corridors and cool domes, baths and lakes,

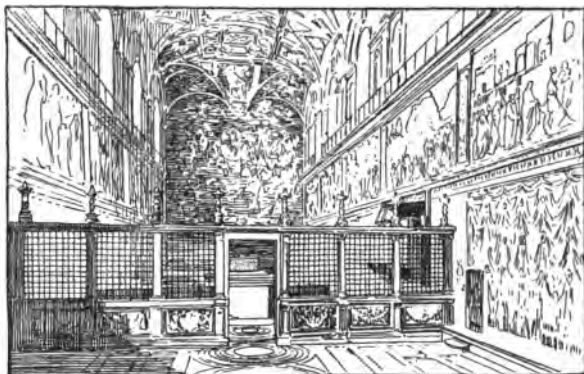
basilicas, libraries, theatres, circuses, and temples of the gods; shining with precious marbles and filled with works of Art. At a sign from the Emperor—to beguile one single man who was weary of the world—these groves and halls would become alive with the mythology of Olympus, swarms of Bacchantes would wander through the vale of Tempe, choruses of Euripides might be heard in the Greek Theatre, and on the artificial lake fleets would repeat in sham fight the battle of Salamis. A pleasure dome beyond the dreams of Kubla Khan; but the glory has long since departed; its marble columns support the Tivoli churches; its Art treasures enrich the Vatican and half the museums in Rome; they are scattered all over Italy, and may even be found in France. All is Vanity, saith the preacher; and this sort of thing only needs a beginning. We ourselves have purchased in Rome a terra cotta pillar and vase for our own

garden terrace, with which we mean to play *Hadrian* to *Macronie* when we get home; throwing our grounds open to him twice a week.

Tivoli itself to-day is better worth seeing than Hadrian's Villa. Its situation is remarkable, astounding. On one side it appears to be perched on a hill top; on the other it hangs over a great abyss into which the river Anio plunges. In 1826 the river took with it in its plunge a church and twenty-six houses, which is more than Niagara ever did. Since then the course of the river has been diverted to prevent further damage. The water-falls are magnificent, the greatest one tumbling down 350 feet. Horace lived here frequently, which is almost sufficient to account for his habit of writing poetry: he sang of *Tibur*—the ancient name of Tivoli—as Burns sang of *Kyle*. The streets, too, are so quaint and steep; carts are rare, and of little

use ; the goods traffic is carried by pack-horses, or more frequently by pack-mules and donkeys. "There goes Modestine," we would say, recalling Stevenson's "Travels with a Donkey"; and now and then a family group would pass by, suggesting a flight into Egypt. O, if ever you go to Rome, make sure that you go to Tivoli !

Our final surprise came with the Villa d'Este. You reach it through an insignificant piazza in Tivoli, which seems to promise nothing but narrow lanes and squalid houses. Passing through a courtyard you descend to a terrace platform, one more *Darien peak* of your life. A great garden is at your feet, with fountains and water courses innumerable ; and beyond it the distant view of the Monticelli group of hill villages. I do not think I have ever seen a view so striking and so suddenly dazzling : if, at the moment, I had been provided with pencil, and paper,—and genius, a new sonnet would have swum into your ken.



SISTINE CHAPEL

XXII

ROME, *February* 1907.

“ART is long: Time is fleeting:” is a great truth to the artist born. It is true also to all lovers of art who chance to be sojourning in Rome. The Art galleries are many, and likewise long; especially the museums of the Vatican through which the tourist stream is ever flowing. An American female in our hotel whom we have dubbed Mrs Dortle—because she delights in mean little dodges

and chortles over them—returned from the Vatican in some distress of mind. We overheard her telling the three American ladies to whom she has attached herself that she had completely failed to track a bust of *Zeus* which friends at home had said she must not miss. She had ticked off the whole crowd of them in that room; one was a double asterisked fellow marked *Giove*, but she could not discover *Zeus* anywhere, and she felt she must go back again the next free day and have another search for him. Her friends who mentioned him are among the best people in Delaware State, and she wouldn't dare face them again without having seen *Zeus*.

It is a curious experience for anyone to wander through these galleries, and to stumble across the familiar figures which we have all known from our youth upwards. No numbered catalogues are needed to recognise *The Laocoon* group, the *Belvedere Apollo*, the

Marble Faun, the *Venus of the Capitol*, the *Dying Gladiator*, and many others. It is impossible to get to know them all intimately. We have been well advised of this; we are trying to get on friendly terms with a few of the best of them; and we go back again and again to visit our special favourites. There is one Antinous, a noble fellow; and a sweet Diana whose acquaintance we are anxiously cultivating. It will be hard to part from them; they are both so great and so good. Our farewell will be in Shakespeare's lines :—

“Hereafter, in a better world than this,
I shall desire more love and knowledge of you.”

We find no single picture gallery in Rome at all comparable to the Paris Louvre, or the Uffizi of Florence, but if it were possible to bring together all the famous paintings that are scattered over the city, Rome would probably possess the greatest gallery in the world. Rome is specially rich in what is more

interesting and impressive than gallery-hung pictures ; she has on the ceilings and walls of her chapels and palaces the loftiest achievements of the two great masters, the high-water mark of Raphael, and of Michael Angelo.

Michael Angelo's decorations of the roof of the Sistine Chapel ; and the frescoes of Raphael on the walls of the state apartments of the Vatican palace, ought to bring more pilgrims to Rome than come to see the Pope. And these priceless treasures—thanks and blessings to the Pope for it—are open and free to everyone. When we recall how often we have had to pay silver coin to enter picture galleries ; and when we think of the poor show for the money, compared with the glorious visions of these two inspired painters, we are prompted to quote with reverence *Sir Launfal's* message :—

“’Tis heaven alone that is given away ;

’Tis only God may be had for the asking.”

I find I am having to alter and enlarge my

conception of Raphael's genius. Hitherto I have thought of him mainly as the painter of perfect *Madonnas* and grand *Coronations*, *Transfigurations*, and other religious works. Now I have discovered, and I am glad to see it, that his mind was not always in a grave *Il Penseroso* mood. The great painter, like the great poet, could sing *L'Allegro* with the best of them. We have now seen his perfectly lovely designs of the *Myth of Psyche* in the great hall of the Farnesina; and in the same palace there is the fresco, done by his own hand, of the fair goddess *Galatea* in her shell, drawn by dolphins over the waves, and surrounded by tritons, sea-nymphs, and the most mischievous little cupids that ever bent a bow. How well he must have known what youth meant, and love, and the joys of living, to give such perfect expression to them all; and to this same man it was also given to paint the greatest picture in the

world, the *Sistine Madonna*, of the Dresden Gallery.

Guido Reni's well-known picture, *The Aurora*, of which the photographs and coloured prints give a false impression, was another fine surprise. It is wonderful in composition, and colour, and movement. This work appears to reveal in Guido Reni the same mind and spirit that was in Raphael. He might have drawn his inspiration from Raphael's *Galatea*; and again, in the great *Crucifixion* over the high altar of the Church of *San. Lorenzo in Lucina*, Reni has painted the most terribly solemn picture in Rome. In Browning's *The Ring and the Book* this church is made the scene of *Pompilia's* baptism and marriage, and here also the bodies of her parents were exposed after the murder. Browning's characteristic reference to the spot is :

"Beneath the piece of Master Guido Reni, Christ on
Cross,
Second to nought observable in Rome."

If Dresden may claim to possess the greatest painting in the world, Rome still has, in the opinion of many, the greatest portrait; that of *Pope Innocent X.* by Velasquez, in the Doria Palace. It is told of James M'Neill Whistler, that he left Rome after a stay of three days. "Ruins don't count," he said, "this is only a stucco city: I am going." James condescended, however, to sanction of this one picture: he may have met the great painter by this time—there is the mere ghost of a chance—and given Velasquez a pat on the shoulder; it would be like James. Men take away from Rome very much what they bring to Rome; and it is clearly manifest that after his three days' stay James M'Neill departed, taking with him Whistler!

Besides the collections of pictures, there are scores of famous paintings resting here and there in solitary state, and to get within sight of them one must have time, and patience, and a pocket-

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ful of small change. Here is a common experience. I went to see the *Four Sibyls* of Raphael which is painted over a chapel arch in the Church of *Santa Maria della Pace*. I found the church, but the doors were shut. Two or three other Baedekered individuals went groping round with me seeking for a sign; but in the end we all departed. I returned another day, in good church hours, I thought, but still the doors were shut. A few ragged youngsters were spinning "peeries" in the church porch: I went among them and watched their game, and gave a prize of two soldi to the champion spinner. Then I turned to more solemn things and knocked at the church door. At this the champion spinner made signs to me to follow him, and he took me through a narrow lane into a small cloistered square, and there, after banging at the back door of the sacristy, he left me. And thus I found the sacristan who took me in, and drew back for me the curtains

that screened the one great treasure of the church. I think I enjoy these adventures with the sacristans about as much as I do the contemplation of the pictures ; at any-rate, I cannot help coupling them with the treasures that are now in their keeping. In this case there were Raphael's *Four Sibyls* for me, and my 40 *centimes* for the sacristan ; sufficient to send us both on our way rejoicing.



XXIII

ROME, *February* 1907.

WE have declined an audience of the Pope. The refusal, I must add, was not intimated to his Holiness—he never requested or commanded our presence—it was given to Mrs Dortle, of Delaware, U.S.A., and

seemed to astound her. Mrs Dortle is one of four married ladies in our hotel who have left their husbands in their respective stores and offices making the dollars that are enabling them to "do" Italy. These ladies were determined that before leaving Rome they would have an audience of the Holy Father. They managed it; and this is how it was done. Mrs Dortle, who is an Episcopalian, had a letter from her Rector to some minor dignitary of the Vatican, requesting his good offices for this wandering lamb of the Episcopal flock. By the playful process of pushing and butting at this official, the wandering lamb received the reward of her importunity. Mrs Dortle and "family" were commanded to attend at the palace of the Vatican on a given day. The ladies danced, metaphorically, a *pas de quatre*, and gave one franc each to the Pope's resplendent messenger. Then Mrs Dortle invited us to join them and become two more of "the

family." I respectfully declined, to the amazement of Mrs Dortle. She wanted to know why. At first I tried banter : I said I would not be allowed to go as her husband, and that if I tried to pass as her son, or a grandchild, the fraud might be detected. In the end I had to tell her as politely as I could that I did not feel we had any right to go, and that we would not enjoy ourselves. I said that while I admired her cheek—I was careful to call it enterprise—I felt we had so many blessings already, that we ought to deny ourselves the Pope's and let it go to devout Catholics and distinguished persons. If I had written a good book, or painted a great picture, or invented a dirigible balloon which might be of use to the Saints, I should feel proud to go if the Pope commanded me. I had done none of these things ; I was in no way whatever a distinguished Scotsman, my golf handicap stood at 10 ; and we really could not join Mrs Dortle's menage. The four

ladies went—Mrs Dortle wearing a black skirt and veil borrowed from our landlady—and good-natured Pius X. received them, and blessed them, and all the rosaries and crosses carried about their persons.

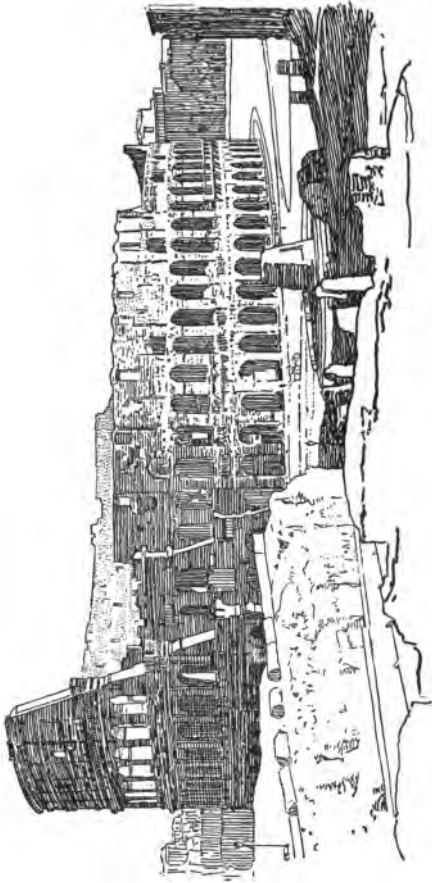
It seems a shame to place the direct successor of St. Peter on cheap exhibition to the vulgar crowd ; but perhaps Holy Mother Church knows what she is about, and plays her leading card for all he is worth to attract the world to Rome. To keep on at this business week after week, the Pope must possess an amiable temper, and an iron constitution : his annual turnover in mixed blessings must be enormous.

In St. Peter's Square I bought a tiny candle-stick, and when we got back to our hotel I found in the parcel a hand-bill advertising the various objects of art and religion for sale at this shop, and a remarkable intimation printed in four languages. Here is the English version :—

"Everything purchased in this shop
will be promptly presented to his
Holiness to be blessed."

I was sorry I did not know of this at the moment of purchase. I would have asked the young lady who served me if a small blessing could not have been thrown in with my candlestick. It is impossible to believe that his Holiness is a party to such humbug; if this were credible, then I would be looking next for a market quotation for *Pope's Benedictions* and curious to see if they fell below par on the day Mrs Dortle obtained her scrip.

I am overhearing that the shops in Rome make a poor show compared with those in London and Paris; and shopping in the Eternal City is by no means a fine art; it is a case of coarse and brutal bargaining. The first lesson in bargaining is usually taken from the street pedlars, men and boys who pester you to buy post-cards and cheap mosaics. The extra-



THE COLOSEUM

ordinary number of these street vendors is a fair indication that Rome is the most tourist-ridden city on earth. The boys hail you with : "50 post-cards, sir, for 1 franc." If you tell them to get off, or "skiddoo," they will stick by you and cry : "23 for yours"; or assure you that they are "in liquidation" and selling off cheap to-day. If you say you do not want the post-cards, they try you with "75 centimes"; and if you affect indifference or scorn, they will offer them at 50 or even 40. As it is with the street-hawker, so is it with the shop-man selling costly jewels and ornaments. Annoyed at this sort of thing, and unwilling (for a time) to play down to the recognised game, we were relieved to discover a jeweller's shop with "Fixed Prices" boldly printed on its doors and windows. We entered to learn the cost of a small intaglio brooch. It was 75 francs, the owner informed us; and he never altered his prices. We thanked him, and rose

to come away : it was rather expensive for us. He bade us sit down and examine the excellence of the cutting ; and as he was desirous of making new customers, he would let us have it at 10 per cent. off for cash, or say 65 francs. I suddenly became bold as a Roman, and said : "I will give you 50 for it." Give me 55," he answered, and it is yours." We did not buy, but we have learned the meaning of "Fixed Prices" in Rome.

This bargaining, or "dickering," which is Mrs Dortle's word for it, is to be seen at its best, or worst, every Wednesday, at a curious market of open booths, held round the *Cancelleria*, and known as the "Rag Fair." Here are old books, old curios, old clothes, and old fabrics and embroideries in great profusion ; and plenty of the old Adam among the buyers and sellers. Bargaining is essential. Shopkeepers set up stalls for the day, and ask about a fourth more than their usual shop prices ; a fact which I

have proved to my own satisfaction. Mrs Dortle herself carried away two brass lamps for which the stall-keepers asked 10 francs each, but she had "dickered" them down to 4 francs.

The open-air markets, especially those for flowers and vegetables, give picturesque notes to the streets of Rome. There are also the troops of scholars of all nations who are here studying for the priesthood. Each nationality has its distinguishing costume; Germans and Hungarians wear red gowns, and when a string of them go by, they make the bright spots in the picture for the eye to rest upon—as the painters say. My brother Scots, who live next door to us under the care of Monsignor Fraser, wear violet and red girdles, but their native blateness tries to cover this *braw-braw-ness* with an overcoat of plain black. I would like well to have a crack with Monsignor Fraser about things in general and Aberdeen; but whenever I pass his door and think of it, the

crack assumes the aspect of an "audience," and so thinking twice of it, I don't go in. I can't help reflecting upon the experience which four or five years of Rome must give to any Scottish lad of parts, quite apart from his ecclesiastical studies and training. There is at least the possibilities of a liberal education beyond the powers of Oxford and Cambridge to bestow.

To return to the streets and the picturesque, there are also the artists' models grouped round the squares and the fountains, and the continual and generous play of the fountains themselves. The most beautiful of them all is one of the smallest, to be found strangely enough, in a grimy square of the Jewish quarter. Four boys in bronze play with dolphins and tortoises, and form a most exquisite group: it is the only fountain design that appears to be honoured by being reproduced in silver and bronze in the company of *Apollo* and his family. But the most amazing fountain to find in the heart of a city

is the Trevi ; it is a fresh wonder every time we pass it. Four very narrow streets run into the small Trevi piazza, and on entering from any of these you are suddenly confronted with great rocks and colossal figures, and a mighty spouting and splashing of water into a basin that covers half the square. It is as if Lanarkshire's Cora Linn, or at least Bonnington Falls, had taken a sudden spurt into Glasgow, and burst out from the façade of the Royal Bank in Exchange Place. It is into the Trevi basin that the departing pilgrims pitch their last spare copper, in the pious belief that their return to Rome is thus ensured. A pleasant superstition—to the Roman beggars and small fry who rake out the tribute money. Alas! in a few days, we, too, shall be making our contributions to this retiring collection.



A STREET IN POMPEII

XXIV

NAPLES; *February* 1907.

WE have spent six lovely days in Naples ; here we have seen the first primroses of Spring and the first swallows of Summer ; but there is ever a fly in the ointment ; here also, we have met the first bite of the mosquito. So it appears to be with all our deeper impressions ; Naples is a blend of rude shock, and rare delight. From its garden sea-front and its famous high-

roads the outlooks are beyond description ; but while every prospect pleases, the street-begging is the most persistent and revolting in the world. Street corners and piazzas meet you everywhere, like scenes from a play, but most of the natives who throng them look the villains of the piece. Many of them, I know, must be honest butchers, or bakers, or candlestick makers, but their appearance is "agin" them ; even in this bright spring weather, they stalk past in their long cloaks scowling at poor me. One fold of the cloak goes over the left shoulder in stage-villain fashion, half-covering the face, and, of course, wholly concealing the possible stiletto. A fair percentage of these men are genuine rogues, and we are advised not to go out much after dark. A few nights ago an American and his wife were in a tramcar returning from a concert to our hotel, when a quarrel arose among some men seated near them. Our American did not know what it was about ; and

says it is possible he may have muttered "O be quiet, you fellows"; but in a flash he found himself drawn into a gehenna of a row. He remarked to us that he had been in the army and twice under fire, but he had never known what fear was till that night in the Neapolitan tramcar. He got off with a little loss of nerve; but since we came to this hotel no less than five resident ladies have had their hand-bags and purses snatched from them in broad daylight in busy thoroughfares. At this moment there are little groups in the drawing-room breathlessly listening to the details of the latest theft. So far we have not been molested; we go forth taking only our lives in our hands, being careful to bury the precious pocket-book near the centre of our being. It is a wise precaution, for when I venture out with my wife, or even with my Baedeker under my arm, I am at once surrounded by a noisy crowd of beggars and cabmen. To escape this persecution I

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occasionally prowl round alone, laying aside my dignified head-gear, and assuming a slouch hat and a scowl, both of which were picked up in Naples. They take me then for one of themselves, and leave me at liberty to take stock of a few of the poorest quarters in the town. I have noticed, *imprimis*, endless quantities of clothing, much of it tail-less, hanging everywhere to dry; then there is live stock and the smells thereof, poultry, pigs, goats, and cows, content with and making the most of their accommodation in the wretched hovels of their lords and masters. The produce of the country is thus brought within the easy reach of man: he can kick the porker if it should be disturbing his own slumbers. The quality of the butter produced under these conditions cannot be guaranteed, but the milk is sent forth pure and unadulterated. There are no milk carts, no contaminating milk-cans, and no deception; goats and cows are led from door to door, and

the pennyworths are squirted from the natural source of supply into the consumers' tumblers or glass bottles.

The diversity of the vehicular traffic is also novel and amusing. We have not yet observed a pig or a hen in harness, but every other domestic animal is compelled, literally, to work like a horse. Dogs, goats, cows, and oxen are persuaded, like any donkey or mule, to walk between the shafts of a cart. The cat manages to escape; but as Kipling has explained, the cat is not domesticated, and continues even in Naples to walk by himself. On the way to Pompeii we discovered an ox and an ass yoked together, and ploughing a field; and in the city streets we often see huge country carts drawn by scratch teams, consisting of a horse, a mule, and a donkey.

We have not entered a church in Naples; it was not necessary; we ran up so many good conduct marks in Rome; but we have gone

three times to the great National Museum, and have visited the Monastery of San. Martino, and the Aquarium in the National Park. This aquarium is a fascinating place, with tanks full of the most gorgeous sea-weeds and anemones, and the weirdest crawly things, and every queer fish of the Mediterranean, alive, alive O. San. Martino is now a government Museum, the fate of all the great Italian Monasteries. To wander through the rooms, and libraries, and peaceful cloisters and gardens, with the beauties of great Art and greater Nature at every turn, one cannot help envying the jovial lot of a holy friar—he was much better off than a Roman Emperor.

The National Museum has to be considered with the visit to Pompeii. It contains a noble collection of ancient statuary, which is better shown here than anything of the kind in Rome. It also has the unique treasures of Herculaneum and Pompeii, from the excavations

begun 160 years ago. It is almost inconceivable, but it is true, that only about a third part of the buried cities has been explored; the excavations go on at a snail's pace; the finds are as interesting as ever, but the Italian government is poor, and very, very proud; and will not accept the frequently proffered helping hands.

Pompeii and Herculaneum were but second class cities of importance, and yet the statues found so far are the most celebrated bronzes of antiquity; witness, the *Narcissus* from Pompeii, and the *Resting Mercury* from Herculaneum. Goths and Vandals sacked the cities of first importance, broke up and carried away to their melting pots the inestimable treasures of bronze—the most appalling blow ever dealt to Art.

I fear I cannot convey to the reader the delightful, uncanny sensation of a walk through the streets and squares and buildings of

Pompeii ; seeing the narrow streets marked with the old cart wheels of eighteen hundred years ago, with the stepping stones at important crossings, and here and there a public fountain ; seeing also the interiors of the shops, and the dwelling-houses and the Public buildings, the Temples, Theatres, and Baths, that were all buried in a three days' shower of boiling water and red-hot ashes ; and knowing that just over the way there are hundreds of other houses waiting to be excavated, each with its own sad tragedy to tell—and wicked old Vesuvius close at hand, looking as innocent as Largo Law. At this distance of time curiosity gets the better of sorrow, and the tragedy is read like a tale of enchantment and fairy wonder. In the National Museum the story gets more and more realistic ; pages of the catalogue of the Pompeian sections read like the catalogue of a modern dispenishing sale—"family leaving the district." Toilet requisites, such as hair-

pins, clasps, combs, vases for perfumes, surgical instruments, three safes (all found empty), lanterns, lamps, and candelabra, weights and scales, beds, musical instruments, and fishing tackle; and rooms full of gold and silver ornaments and jewels. These I have noted from a few pages of the official catalogue, but the list of all kinds of domestic, scientific, and artistic articles extends to 50 pages and more. Was there ever a romance of El Dorado, or a treasure island story to match the reality of Herculaneum and Pompeii?

We have kept Vesuvius at a respectful distance, but to show that we were not afraid of him, we took a less expensive trip to Pozzuoli, and there walked over the crater of the active volcano Solfatara. We looked into a small opening of about a yard in diameter which had broken out in steam and hot gases only ten days ago—*le dernier cri* in eruptions. Our feet became hot as if we were

walking on the floor of an oven, and our guide let us hear the ground sounding hollow beneath us—only three feet of caked earth between us and *Lochaber no more*. There is one principal outlet where hot ashes and sulphur gases are constantly being ejected ; and close beside it there is a hut of wattles made, where invalids come for a sulphur cure. There is some connection between Vesuvius and Solfatara ; when the one is restless the other is still : the big mountain does the destructive work, the small one the healing.

Naples, like Glasgow, is a good place to get away from : within easy reach of Glasgow Cross there is the Greenock *Cut*, and the road to the Cloch ; and Naples has Castellamare at hand, and the road from Sorrento to Amalfi. At this distance from home my visions of the magnificent views from the Greenock *Cut* are blurred and dull compared with the glories of Sorrento and Amalfi. But I know what will

happen when I get back: Macronie will draw me to my dining-room window, and call my attention to the sun setting behind the Cowal hills. "Now, tell me," he will say, "in all your wanderings, did you ever see anything finer than that?" My intellect, my cold, reasoning intellect, will get the upper hand for a moment and suggest Sorrento; but my reply will come from the bottom of my heart: "No, old chap, I never did."



XXV

PERUGIA, *March 1907.*

THE trustworthy Baedeker is seldom found tripping, but he stumbles badly concerning Perugia. He recommends the traveller to devote a day, or a day and a half to the place : our devotion has extended to a week, and we fain would stay on longer. We are resting from our labours in Naples and Rome, and enjoying the great peace of this once most warlike of cities. Queen of the hill-cities it is

called, and capital of "green Umbria." The season is three weeks later than usual, and Umbria still wears a robe of olive gray, with a very slight trimming of greenery. We sleep on the topmost floor of the tallest hotel in Perugia, which must be about as high up as *Goat Fell*. The views from the town extend in every direction for fifty or sixty miles; on a clear day, looking southward, the peak of a mountain which is known to be a hundred miles away may sometimes be seen. On the crest of Perugia's hill there is one fine street of about three or four hundred yards long, beginning and ending with a broad piazza. The chief square has lost its old style and is now called the *Piazza Vittorio Emanuele*, a name which we seem to have met before. It appears in every inhabited corner of Italy; some old historical name, or square itself, is wiped out to make room for it, and I am not Italian enough to like it. To us the name is becoming as

dreary as *Poulet roti*, and nothing can be staler than that after a six months' experience of hotel dining-rooms. I feel sure that "the honest King" himself would object to this wanton removal of old place names and landmarks, and to the unnecessary repetitions of his title. The main street, however, has been, and still is, well called the *Corsa Vannucci*, after Pietro of that family, who lived and painted here. The Perugians have given him more than a street-name; they are proud at having Pietro Vannucci better known, and for all time as *Perugino*. In this street of his stands the great Municipal Palace containing some of his finest works; and more interesting still, there is the Audience Chamber of the Bankers' Guild, with the walls decorated by *Perugino*. It is worth while coming to Perugia only to see this room. The audience chamber, and the adjoining little chapel, and the fine church of St. Peter's are among the best uninjured and



unrestored examples of decorative buildings in Italy. The wood-carving in the choir stalls of St. Peter's is finer than anything of the kind I have ever seen.

But we are here to loaf around, and to let our minds lie fallow for a week. We attend the markets in the piazzas, when the country folk bring in "butter and eggs and a pound of cheese." We saw one young girl standing alone, and all she had to sell apparently was a couple of live pigeons. She seemed to be in need of soap and hairpins and perhaps this was her way of getting them. Any amount of crockery ware was spread over the pavements, and basket-work of all kinds at ridiculously low prices. There was also any number of wooden *ruzzolas* for sale, in sizes to suit children, young folks, and men. This was my first introduction to the *ruzzola*, and I only learned its purpose in life on the road to Assisi, of which I will tell when we come to that story.

From the one broad, high, and main street of Perugia, with cathedral and palaces imposing enough for Venice or Rome, the other streets break away in narrow streams, and go tumbling down-hill, and escape to the country, past walls and through ports built by the Etruscans long before the Roman and the Christian eras. Some of these slips of thoroughfare recall the Advocate's Close as it drops from the High Street of Edinburgh ; but the Perugian streets are more subtle and varied, with archways and winding steps ; and moreover, they are sweet and clean, being washed down twice a day. The one objection to such streets is that when you go down town, you have got to get up again. The natives take them all in the day's work, and have acquired a steady ascending gait that looks as simple as winking ; try as we might we could not get into it, and had to fall back a good deal on the scenery. The Perugians are a busy industrious people ; you

hear the clink and tinkle of forges all day long, working at plough-shares and pruning-hooks. In the old days the forges were kept as busy, but mainly with swords and spears for the continual warfare with the neighbouring cities. Now it is the farmer's needs that make the chief industries of the place ; but there is also a silk mill and a carpet factory, and an enterprising firm has invented a patent and extra safety match or vesta. A man may give them to his baby to suck, and no harm is done to the child—or to the matches. Our hotel manager put a vesta through the performance for my benefit, doubling himself the rôles of father and sucking-babe, and striking a light with the soaking vesta.

This hotel is a true mountain hospice, a traveller's joy ; possessing a library of real books, and plenty of them. We have felt more at home here than anywhere else on our travels ; so many of the books are my own books, only

stamped with the Brufani Hotel mark. I got deep in the life of St. Francis, and that decided us to go to Assisi, which is only fifteen miles away. We gave a whole day to this cheerful Saint, driving to Assisi in the forenoon, and home to Perugia in the evening. A cheerful sinner, one Giuseppe drove us, and from him we learned of *ruzzolas* and many things. Giuseppe would tell us anything: he began by informing us that he was thirty and married, that his wife was twenty-five, and that they had five children, three of whom were dead. As we trotted along the beautifully made country road, we were constantly meeting or overtaking men and boys playing *ruzzola*. A *ruzzola* is a round wooden disc, one of medium size is shaped not unlike the sweet-milk scone of my youth which sold for twopence, but thicker and heavier in the centre—very much heavier. The game is to hurl the *ruzzola* as far as possible, exactly as the “bullet” throwers do on the

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country roads at home. The crack players use a short length of wide tape to put extra spin on the disc as it leaves the hand ; but Giuseppe informed me that the best sport of all is when the game is played with round cheeses, and the *ruzzolas* themselves become the prizes.

But if I go on to give a tithe of Giuseppe's secular conversation, the Saint will not have an innings at all. Assisi, made famous by St. Francis, clings to the side of a hill ; not perched on the top like Perugia. On the plain beneath the town there is a huge pilgrim church built over the cell of St. Francis, his favourite little chapel, and the tiny room in which he died ; curious things as relics to discover within church walls and under a temple dome. The waist-cord of the Saint is also here, but that is a small church relic compared with a chapel. Up in the town itself a Franciscan Brother (and a brother man) showed us round the famous churches of his order, with the frescoes

by Giotto and Cimabue, the greatest in the world, he assured us, all as described in the guide-books. He was an enthusiastic admirer of his church, and indignant with a certain "restoring" architect who had removed the fine choir stalls—now being replaced—and who had also taken away a protecting eave, and so allowed the rain to ruin some of the finest frescoes. "And what is he up to now?" I asked. "O, he is now dead," said the friar; and he looked pleased as I fervently ejaculated: "Hallelujah!"

While we were going round the church a bonnie little black-eyed girl of eight or nine, and decently dressed, came up to us, begging. The Brother bade her go away, and told us that she and her sister were continually asking help from him; and that their father was alive, and a Count of Assisi! There is quite a crop of Counts of Assisi who are now very poor—"the woods are full of them," as the Americans

say; but it was rather pathetic to meet with this strange sign of Assisi's ancient glory and present decay. We made a small collection for our Brother's poor. "God reward you for your charity," he said, as he presented us with three leaves from the miraculous thornless rose-bushes of St. Francis; and three microscopic portions of his holy shrine, his wooden pulpit, and of the door of the cell in which he died. I put these beside my other holy relics—the leaves we plucked in the protestant cemetery of Rome, where the ashes of Keats and Shelley rest.

I like St. Francis well: he was a kindly, cheerful soul. He invented the little shows in the manger for the country folks at Christmas; and had a kind word, they say, for the birds and the fishes. We must endeavour to see Siena also; but St. Catherine of that city does not attract me so much as St. Francis. She was too severe with herself, vexing the soul of

her dear mother by her self-inflicted tortures. It was the pious convention of her day to do these awful things, and it is difficult for us to apprehend the spiritual fervour that suggested them. Among the pious conventions of our time, are the dedication of one's smartest apparel to the Lord's day; and, during Lent, the renunciation of Bridge at 10 P.M. sharp; conventions passing strange to St. Catherine.

XXVI

PERUGIA,
March 1907.



THE relics of the saints, of which every church in Italy holds a fair assortment, present many a queer problem. It is a natural and beautiful impulse to venerate objects that once belonged to good and great men and women; most of us would love to possess an inkstand of Sir Walter Scott's, or even an old

quill which he had used ; but in Italy one is bewildered by the number and the nature of the relics which appear to be accepted as authentic, and even miraculous. I have acquired the habit of listening gravely to the stories told to us, and receiving them as fascinating fairy tales ; but I often wonder how they are regarded by the average native. Is it with him a case of gross superstition, and the complete suppression of the logical faculty ? Or has he the convenient gift of the Presbyterian ministers who believe with their whole souls and a mental reservation ? Doubtless many of the Italians simply recognise in the relic an aid to devotion, and give no thought to the questions of authenticity.

There is preserved in Perugia a famous relic with a curious history. To most of the stories that are beyond my belief, I can listen, as I have said, with due solemnity, making no signs of scepticism in the presence of the pious

narrators; but it was a great trial to take seriously the yarn of the Virgin's wedding-ring. Its artless insensibility to all moral principle justifies a smile, and the winking of the other eye.

The wedding-ring of the Virgin, of priceless value, and of a rare iridescent agate, rests in Perugia's Cathedral. Five times only, during the course of the year, can it be seen by the devout or the curious; for the rest of the time it lies in a noble silver casket, shut up and firmly secured by fifteen separate locks, the keys of which are held by fifteen distinguished citizens of Perugia. This astute plan for the safe-keeping of the ring was devised in the days when *Chubb* and *Milner* were not; for the ring was brought to Perugia in the year of our Lord, 1472. So far, the tale is a serious one, and sufficient to make us respect and almost envy Perugia's honoured citizens. Enter now the villain of the piece, who manages to turn the

subject of a morality play into the plot for a comic opera. He is a monk, Brother Vinterio di Magonza, who, according to the chroniclers, in 1472 brought the ring to Perugia, having "piously stolen" it from the Franciscan Monastery of Chiusi; and thus, it follows, that the fifteen distinguished guardians of the ring are neither more nor less than "pious" resettlers of stolen goods! If holy mother church has winked for centuries at this, why may not you and I?

Driving back to Perugia from Assisi the other evening, I devised and set in motion the great Chiusi conspiracy. I disclosed the plot to Giuseppe, who has now the root of the matter in him; the seed alone is mine. Giuseppe, I find, is a native of Chiusi, driving at present his carriage in Perugia—for hire. As the plot grows and thickens, he will require to enroll fourteen fellow-conspirators, and, by the vow of the sparrow-hawk, swear them to secrecy. In

all, fifteen men of Chiusi will be needed, desperate fellows who will stick at nothing. Before them lies a difficult and delicate task, demanding great tact and nerve, and a knowledge of men. It may take years of preparation ere the conspirators decide to venture all in their bold attempt. On a given day, at a well-timed hour and moment, the fifteen men of Chiusi will measure wits, or swords it may be, with the fifteen distinguished Perugians—and God defend the right! Man will be pitted against man, as in old tourney or modern golf match ; but the desperate case of Chiusi is that she must be prepared to win all along the line ; a single check from the opposing side, and the keys of the situation would be lost.

The Perugians are chosen men and resourceful, but meantime they have no suspicion of this plot. I am impressing upon Giuseppe the importance of keeping everything dark. No hint of the scheme must reach the press ; as

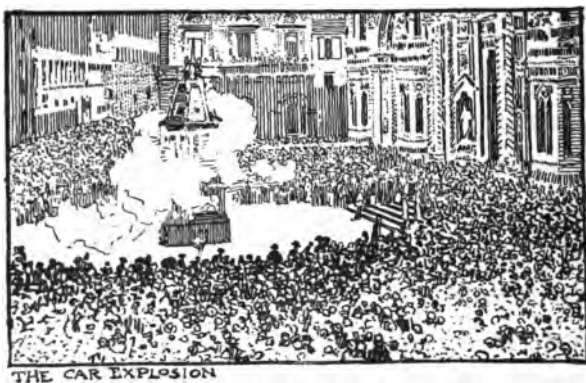
likely as not, the Editor of *The Perugia Weekly Griffin* is a distinguished citizen and one of the fifteen. For the stern work before them the Chiusi men will have to adopt many expedients and disguises. A few may be trained as barbers and with art and craft gain access to the chambers and to the chins ; and, if need be, to the very throats of the enemy. One or two may be medical men, for at the critical hour much may be done with a sleeping draught, or by judicious blood-letting. Several might be clergymen, pious priests of the church, and ultimately father confessors to Perugia's distinguished sons ; men who could put the fear of Peter upon the unscrupulous guardians, and also keep a watchful eye upon the casket. Chiusi must come to her own again by hook or by crook—by both, if necessary. The fifteen keys must be taken, the casket opened, and the ring restored to its original and rightful owners.

So was the great plot outlined to Giuseppe

on the road from Assisi to Perugia. He discussed it as gravely as I did, and if nothing ever comes of it, it is his fault—not mine.

I regret we did not see this relic ; it was not our good fortune to be in Perugia at the time of its public exhibition ; but in Rome, in the church of *Santa Sabina*, I saw and handled as questionable a keepsake. In this church there is a marble slab on which St. Dominic was wont to lay him down and say his prayers. One day while he was so engaged, the evil one in a temper hurled a block of black marble at the saint. It was a poor shot, and St. Dominic merely went on with his collect for the day, never turning a hair. The devil, naturally was mad, but had not the courage to try a second putt. In proof of the genuineness of this incident the actual stone is preserved in the church as a relic, perched on a short pillar in the nave. I know not whether the clergy value this marble block as a holy relic or as

one of the other sort ; it is certainly an impish queer one. Some may consider this story, not a subject for mild ridicule but rather one worthy of respect, as an interesting record of the childhood of religion, when spiritual conflict had to be pictured for simple, unlearned souls in clumsy parable. It may be so, but I doubt it. Wisdom lies not that way in our time ; and the devil's black stone would be better away from its exalted position in *Santa Sabina*, and consigned to a museum of antiquities.



XXVII

FLORENCE, *Easter* 1907.

ON the journey from Perugia to Florence, there is a moving panorama of all the lovely little bits of scenery which the great masters have used as the backgrounds of their religious pictures. From Rome to Perugia is a much wilder track ; at some parts reminiscent of our own Beattock district, and at others, of a reduced version of the St. Gotthard Pass. It is

a roundabout route, but we would not wish to have it shortened by a mile; it pays well in the long run, and no traveller can forget this road from Rome to Florence.

After an absence of nineteen years, we have come back to the Italian city of our early love. Since we last saw Florence, her own people have done wicked things to mar her beauty; but we find we love her still, and are glad we came. The *Mercato Vecchio* is gone for ever; and most of the men who removed it are flourishing like green bay trees. Where it once so picturesquely stood, there is now a modern hum-drum square which has been named with unerring dullness, the *Poulet Roti*—I mean, the *Piazza Vittorio Emanuele*. This, however, is but a fraction of the Florentines' iniquity; had they repented, and put the new square to its proper use, one might have said let bygones be bygones. Here, to their hand, in the heart of the town, was a decent enough

space for a tramway terminus ; the best it now could be. If Florence must have cars, let them career round the equestrian statue of Vittorio Emanuele II. But the council of the city decreed otherwise ; they left the new square of the Old Market-place severely alone, and pitched upon the piazza of their beautiful Cathedral for the centre of their tramway system ! All day long the noisy cars go hooting and clanging round Brunelleschi's dome, to be shunted at Giotto's *Campanile* ! For adequate language to meet the case we want Ruskin or Dante to return to Florence ; and to come at once by the latest route, the newly projected *Via Quattro Dimensione*. Ruskin would relieve himself (and me too) in one of his fiery letters ; and Dante might add a fresh canto to his *Inferno*, making it hot for the city fathers of to-day.

We got into Florence before Holy Week, in time to see the preparations for Easter. I cannot make up my mind about this week of

mixed holiness and holiday. Florence, in a great measure, lives upon the strangers within her gates; and the varied celebrations in the churches, in addition to whatever spiritual value they may possess, serve to attract the visitor, and thus indirectly contribute to the material prosperity of the city. The church festivals are well advertised in the local papers; on one day there is the blessing of palms; on another, a show of candle light, or a solemn act of foot-washing; and every day, music, banners, and processions. The country people come in and go round the churches, and the booths, which are erected in the church piazzas, and seem to be enjoying their holiday; to natives, as well as to strangers, it is plainly a week of show, show, show. Last week we were in time to see priests in their priestly garments going round the town, with a sprinkler brush, accompanied by a little boy who carried the holy water. They went from door to door, entering, and

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sprinkling a blessing upon every dwelling. We were unfortunately out when the shower passed down our street, and no droppings fell on us. The only really impressive thing we have seen is the preaching that takes place during Lent in the Cathedral. A great cloth is suspended from the roof of the nave, and beneath it large congregations gather every day to listen to a preaching friar. The scene suggests what we have read of Savonarola thundering to the Florentines of his day, and probably from this very pulpit. I am sorry I cannot understand the message, but this friar is the first person who has made the Italian speech sonorous and musical to my ears; his accent is so free from the common rasping tone we hear everywhere around us, even from well educated people. He is an earnest and eloquent preacher, and produces an uneasy feeling that he really would be getting at me if I only knew what he was saying. I move slowly away, making shrewd

guesses at the particular new leaf the friar was beseeching me to turn over ; but when I pass from the gloom to the sunshine and behold the tramcars, I at once begin to divine, and to know, and be certain that he was not getting at me at all, but was going for the city fathers, and denouncing their tramnable folly.

Good Friday was a quiet day ; but Good Saturday brought plenty of bustle and noise. It was the great day of *Lo Scoppio del Carro*, which, being interpreted, means "The Car explosion"; a festival, peculiar to Florence, which originated 600 years ago. The custom is quaint, and if it were not so very old we might call it childish ; its origin is wrapped up in many legends ; and to amuse my little niece Winsome, I have tried to undo the best of them. Once upon a time there lived in Florence a rich merchant who would spell his name *Pazzi*, but as everyone else did, he just called himself Patsy, and Patsy he is called to this day. For

the good of his soul, in the year 1099, Patsy went off with the crusaders to Palestine ; and there he became the bravest of the brave, and was the first to set up the standard of Christ on the walls of Jerusalem. For this brave deed he got many rewards, and among them he was allowed to take away some flinty stones from the tomb of our Lord. When he got home Patsy presented the sacred flints to the Rulers of Florence, who put them for safety in a church, and considered them precious stones indeed. By and by, every Easter time, after the gloom and darkness of Good Friday, it became the custom on Good Saturday morning to relight the church candles with fire struck from these sacred pieces of flint ; and, so much was this kindling esteemed, the people would rush and struggle for the honour of being the first to have their own little candles lit from the sacred fire. It so chanced, in the year 1300, that a bold young Patsy, one of the old family, had

the luck to come out first in the candle-light, or candle-fight ; and all the Patsy boys were so pleased at this, that they determined to celebrate the event with an annual jollification and fireworks. Year by year the boys had a bigger spree, and bought more squibs and crackers ; and at last they got leave to wheel a great Car of Fireworks into the Cathedral square once a year, on Good Saturday, and there to have a great blow-out. That custom has continued for hundreds of years, and we saw it take place again on Saturday. Four white bullocks, about as big as elephants, draw the car to the square. The car is black, and suggests a huge hearse ; but they manage to brighten it up a bit with its decorations of crackers ; and it towers up as high as a two-storeyed house. A wire is fixed to the middle of the car, and runs in at the main door of the Cathedral, and right up to a pole fixed at the high altar. At mid-day mass a light is applied to an artificial dove, which

comes whizzing along the wire, and goes bang into the car, and sets off the fireworks. All went well on Saturday, and everybody was satisfied. The noise of the fireworks was deafening; and after them the bells of the Cathedral and the Tower—the whole jing bang of them—rang out a merry peal. The Cathedral and the square were crowded; the country folk come in for the show, firmly believing that a good harvest will follow if the dove flies well and makes no hitch; but bad luck to them and to the man that fixed up the machinery if the dove should stick on the wire before it reaches the car.

From the crowded square where everybody was, we slipt away to a very quiet spot, and found ourselves alone in the Protestant Cemetery, which is almost as beautiful as the one in Rome. This graveyard, too, has its pilgrim shrines. We found the stone so simply inscribed: *E. B. B. obiit. 1861*, where Robert

Browning left his dear, dead wife ; and not far from it is the grave of Arthur Hugh Clough who sang at Naples his *Easter Hymn* of the great Hope, and came on to Florence to die, and haply learn if Christ indeed be risen. Walter Savage Landor rests here, which is all the stone says of him ; four lines of his own might have followed :

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife ;
Nature I loved ; and next to Nature, Art.
I warmed both hands against the fire of life ;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

I came across one other stone with a fine medallion portrait, which was even more to me than the others ; it marked the grave of a man whom I never saw, but who was spiritual father and guide to many young men of my time. What John Hunter and John Kelman have doubtless done, and are still doing, with the living voice for the Scottish youth of to-day, Theodore Parker, with a little book, did for

many of us in the seventies, when we were making our bolt from cast-iron Calvinism.

“ His name is engraved in marble :
his virtues in the hearts of those
he helped to free from slavery and
superstition.”

These words I took from his tomb-stone, and I shall write them in my copy of his book. A cheap little book it was, costing a shilling or less, in paper covers, and poorly printed ; the title, *A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*. Parker died in 1864, long before his message found me ; I could never thank him, but I bestowed upon his modest book the honours and decorations of a Bagster's Bible—I got it bound in full morocco.



XXVIII

FLORENCE, *March* 1907.

WHEN the blow falls, and we have to sell all, and leave home to settle in Italy, our minds are made up to come to Florence, rather than go to Rome. Rome, it is true, may have a little more Michael Angelo and Raphael to her credit ; but Florence, has enough of both for our requirements. Florence, too, has a good dash of Leonardo da Vinci ; and as for Donatello, and the Della Robbias, and him of

blessed memory Fra Angelico, why, the city is full of them, adorning her palaces, museums, and churches. But speaking the truth—"honest injun"—our decision would not be determined by the presence or absence of the Great Masters: it is Florence herself who is the Great Mistress; mistress mine of Italian cities,

"That can sing both high and low."

We have been in the very house we long to live in: it is in the *Via de Bardi*—Romola's street—Number—no, I won't give the number, and have some of you taking it over our heads. We have a friend keeping it warm for us now, and we have afternoon teas with her there. It is a flat in an old palace by the riverside, overlooking the *Ponte Vecchio*; and from the little drawing-room you step out to a balcony, or a loggia, or something of the sort which is unlike anything else of the kind, and you look sheer down to the river Arno, and over the

city, and far away to Fiesole and Vallombrosa. Florence and its country-side are so beautiful ; and the city itself is big enough to interest one, and not so big as to overwhelm : Paris or Rome for some other life—Florence for this one :—

“What’s to come is still unsure.”

Our friends of the *Via de Bardi* took us one day to Fiesole, and from there we walked to the *Castello di Vincigliata*, a castle of the 14th century, restored and fitted up in mediæval style ; a most interesting place. The kitchen open fire seemed big enough to roast a whole bullock from the *Scoppio del Carro* ; and when we passed into the vaulted dining-room we indulged in a make-believe wassail, and cried “skoal !” to each other across the table. In two of the rooms, the lion-hunter has got the better of the decorator, and the style is mixed Mediæval and late Victorian. To commemorate the visits of Gladstone, and of Queen

Victoria, their portrait medallions have been fixed in the walls; and both look rather wandered beside some *Botticelli* Saints and a *Della Robbia* Madonna. There is a lofty tower, with a splendid view, which recalled the look-out from the heights of Perugia. A door at the top of the tower admits to an iron cage big enough to hold a man. It was the pleasant custom in the good old times to expose prisoners of war, naked, in cages such as this; and to leave them to die of starvation, and become food for the corbies.

“O'er his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair.”

On another day we re-visited the *Certosa di Val d'Ema*, and were shown round by the same bearded, jolly-looking monk who was our guide in 1888. I mentioned the fact to him: “You have not altered much,” I said; and I think he might have responded with as fair an

embroidery ; but he did not appear to remember me at all. He told us that he had been twenty-nine years in this *Certosa*. The best part of the show is the monastery garden, surrounded by the cells of the monks, and with the beautiful draw-well in the centre. When we were being shown one of these cells, with its own little private garden plot, and the fine view of Florence and Fiesole ; our ancient Trappist remarked—it is the thing to say at this part of his lecture—"It is so lovely, is it not?" A "Gibson Girl" of the party made him the roguish rejoinder : "Yes, but so lonesome, is it not?" He will doubtless tell that to the brethren when Sunday comes round ; the strict rule of their order is "silence," but they are allowed to converse with each other for an hour and a half on Sunday afternoon. They must have rare stories to swap of the sayings and doings of the pagans and heretics who flit through the *Certosa*, dropping jokes, and

silver, and *H's* by the way. It was a monk also that used to convoy the visitors over the old monastery of *San. Marco* in Florence, the appropriate guide to Fra. Angelico's frescoes, and Savonarola's cell. Now the place is called a museum, and government caretakers, with gold bands on their caps, meet one at every turn to point out the perfectly obvious. Apart from the sum expended, the act of tipping is disagreeable to most men: it demeaneth him that gives and him that takes. The only tips that are entirely free from guile and twice blessed, are the private and confidential transactions that take place between schoolboys and their uncles. All the rest are hateful; nevertheless, one sudden franc to a friar whom you have been following, is much less painful than five slowly drawn twopences to Government flunkies who have been following you.

We are now into our third week of Florence,

and feeling a bit weary in the earnest pursuit of the old Masters, and the monastic life, I determined to restore the balance by witnessing a cock-fight, or a football match, or something about that level. The best I could find, was an exhibition of the Italian national game of *Pallone* (pronounced "paloney"), and it acted like a charm. I tried to see this game in Rome, but *Pallone* was "off" when we were there; but I now see that the banging tambourine-and-ball game which we saw in the Borghese grounds was an echo of the real *Pallone*. It is a fine game to watch; but the players are all professionals, and that lowers it to our home football grade. In many respects it resembles tennis; the scoring, for example, is marked 15, 30, 40, and game. It is played in a large court, one hundred metres long and about thirty wide. A great wall, at least 60 feet high, runs along one side of this court; the other side and top and bottom are set

apart for the spectators. The game is usually a "six-some"; three players, that is, on each side. The balls are of heavy leather, tightly inflated, and a little bigger than a full-sized croquet ball. Instead of a racquet, the players grip a tremendous weapon, in shape not unlike a young girl's muff; but this is no affair of fur or feather, it is composed of a series of hard wooden cog-wheels riveted together, the cogs or spikes giving the suggestion of a gigantic knuckle-duster. The ball is served as in our game of "Rounders"; and the batter, or "beater," starting from a springboard, rushes to meet the service, and goes for the ball with might and main. If he be a Samson, and get the right angle of flight, he may hurl the ball to the opposite boundary, over the heads and beyond the reach of his opponents. This seldom happens, but I saw it done; and the crowd cheered the mighty stroke. The play is to return the ball as in tennis, taking it on

the first bounce, or before it touches the ground. A short ball is fatal, for it is at once, and easily returned to the other boundary. There are intricacies in marking the score which tend to foster the gentle art of laying the odds. Every player scores for himself, as well as for his team; and so it becomes possible for a super-excellent man to be on the losing side, and yet to finish the hero of the game with the highest individual score. The players, too, according to their skill, are handicapped before the game by the *Director of Pallone*; and a tremendous betting business goes on—the six players being backed as if they were race-horses. They receive in wages from four to five pounds a week; and their “chances,” from consistent backers and grateful winners. These things and some others concerning *Pallone* were told to me by the porter of our hotel, who, I fear, is more familiar with the game and the players than is good for him. I

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hear he is a good son, and very attentive to a sick mother, whose bad attacks are due on *Pallone* match days. Our landlord winks at this; for the lad is a first-rate porter.



A PALLONE PLAYER



XXIX

SIENA, *April* 1907.

LIFE, says the wiseacre, has many ups and downs. This is no longer the brilliant saying it once was ; and, moreover, the older one grows, the harder it is to distinguish between an up and a down. We have been smiling at a quaint representation of Fortune's Wheel on a little wooden door in the Communal Palace of Siena, on which a man is seen changing to an ass as he rises on the wheel,

and recovering his human shape as he falls. That does not settle the question; but it is not a bad contribution to the argument from a wood-carver of the fourteenth century. A week ago we were living like lords, as they say, at the rate of ten francs a day for each person; the highest price we have yet paid in our wanderings. For this sum, we were in the lap of luxury, with comfortable rooms, excellent victuals and drink, which included afternoon tea as well as wine. To these gross material necessities was added a crowning glory, and no extra charge; our names appeared with those of Counts and Marquises, and countless Americans, in the visitors' list of the *Florence Herald*. Afternoon tea, and that last infirmity of the visitors' list, are denied us in Siena; but in all other respects we are as well off as we were in Florence; and the rate is only five francs a day. We have surely come down in the world; here is

a turn of Fortune's Wheel; and yet we are not feeling unduly depressed. Confound that wood-carver, I say, when I think of our stay in Florence; he is much too personal! I have devoted a part of the daily surplus to the purchase of a copper pot—the actual one in which hot water is brought to us morning and evening. It is one of the lovely, “bulgie-some” pots in everyday use which we admired so much in Pisa, and longed to bring away with us. The packing of a copper pot requires some reflection: it is not like a panama hat. My contention is that the vessel may be stuffed with garments; and that as the thickness, or rather the thinness of the copper is of no account, the result will be exactly similar to what is achieved by a brown paper parcel: nothing can be simpler to pack than that. I even go so far as to recommend the purchase of many similar pots (to be used afterwards as economical wedding gifts); and to treat

them all as described. At the various frontiers the contents of our boxes could be declared as *potted underclothing*; but the packer-in-chief will not listen to this sensible suggestion.

A traveller in Italy may sometimes grow weary of picture galleries and church interiors; but it is impossible for a sane person to lose interest in the cities themselves. No truthful traveller can complain that one place is so much like another, for an unfailing charm of Italy is the marked individuality of its cities. We have now realised a long-cherished dream, to see Perugia and Siena. Travelled friends who sang their praises usually bracketed them together; and, unconsciously, we had come to consider them twin cities, with some kind of family resemblance. It is not so: Perugia stands by herself, beautiful for situation, and with a character of her own. Siena also stands alone a fresh surprise and delight; less beautifully situated than Perugia, but greater

and more interesting in the buildings and Art treasures within her walls. It has remained, until this year, the most perfectly mediæval of the Tuscan cities ; but workmen are busy erecting the overhead wires for a tramway service, that will run through streets so narrow that a bullock-cart may block the way.

In Siena, the memory of St. Catherine, the dyer's daughter, is still revered ; her father's workshop is turned into a gorgeous chapel, and the rooms of his dwelling-house into oratories ; but she does not hold the unique place in the city that St. Francis does in Assisi. Assisi belongs wholly to St. Francis, but St. Catherine is only one of Siena's glories. In addition to this marvellous daughter, Siena has given birth to numerous sons of great fame. In her State Archives she possesses the records of their work—of churchmen, statesmen, soldiers, and artists—documentary records from the year 736 onwards. To the Church alone she has

given eight popes and thirty-eight cardinals ; and what is one Saint among so many !

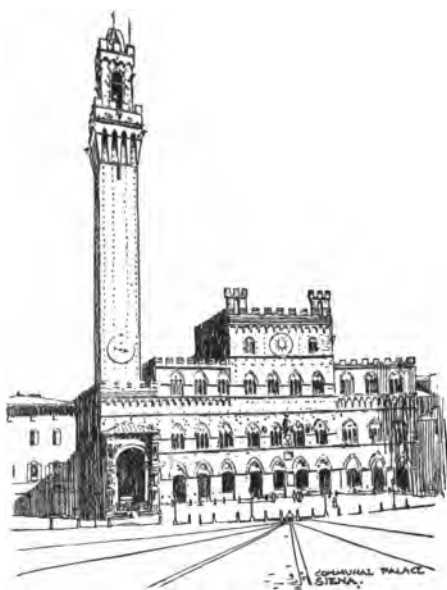
To obtain the right conception of what the city has been in her prime, one must visit the *Palazzo Piccolomini*, which, now contains the State Archives. If you have the good fortune to be taken round by the present custodian—an old Crimean soldier, proud of his medals and of his wooden leg—you will have two hours of rare instruction and entertainment. I understood him to say he had been a bugler boy in the Crimean campaign ; he is now an enthusiastic lover of old books, with a profound and undisguised contempt for anything printed after the year 1400. He is the caretaker of eighty-two rooms full of city registers, State documents, and many valuable illuminated volumes deposited here for safety ; and others from the suppressed monasteries in the district. He would pass from room to room hauling out for us from this shelf and that, a book, or rather a

great bale of old parchment, bound in heavy wooden boards, and dump it on the floor. He would then comment upon the beauty of the old penwork compared with our modern calligraphy; and ask us to feel the old leaves and consider the weight of mutton which the parchment represented;—bleating “baa, baa,” to me in the universal tongue, to make up for my lack of Italian. We were allowed to handle the diplomas of Emperors, and the bulls of Popes; the actual contract for the building of the Cathedral; and Niccolo Pisano’s receipt, in his own handwriting, for something under 280 francs, for the carving of the great Duomo pulpit. And I put my finger on the name of Giovanni Boccaccio (he wrote it “Iovanni,” by the way), where he himself signed it to his last will and testament. In old city registers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we saw inscribed the original “marriage lines” of the citizens, with the amount of the dowries in *lire and soldi*

brought by the brides to their lords and masters. It seemed so comical to have the very halfpence noted ; many of the *dots* worked out in British money to eight shillings and fivepence halfpenny ; the Sienese taking over their wives at bargain prices ! Dante himself made diligent search among the older records ; and many of them which he must have thumbed are shown under glass, and opened at the pages which detail the good or evil deeds of men whom the poet placed in his Divine Comedy. The story told in a page of prose is condensed by Dante into three or four lines of poetry ; and the poet's version is likewise submitted for comparison. I begin to feel that it would take two hours to tell all that took us two hours to see, in the company of this congenial fellow-traveller "in the realms of gold." The veteran bugler, and bookbinder—for he repairs and restores the old bindings in the antique manner—shook hands with us warmly when we parted ; and confided

to us that he had to set out for Rome that evening, to be on guard on the morrow for four hours in the Pantheon at the tomb of Victor Emanuel, his King. Perhaps the day was some solemn anniversary ; I do not know ; but the old soldier was very proud at having been commanded to serve.

Our original intention in coming to Siena was to stay for a night—possibly for two nights ; but we now see the absurdity of that plan. We shall give to Siena at least the devotion which we gave to Perugia. We must get familiar with all the ins and outs of the *Campo* ; and with the great Cathedral on the hill. Besides, the cost of living is so low in Siena, that the longer we stay on here, and resist the temptations of Paris, the more hope there is of a balance in cash sufficient to take us home. We have had an extra busy half-year ; and are now seriously considering the advisability, nay, the necessity of getting back to Scotland soon for some rest, and a holiday.



XXX

SIENA,
April 1907.

S IENA,
for its
size, is the
most in-
teresting

place we have anywhere seen. Its population is under 26,000, but it is packed with buildings and objects of the greatest possible historical and artistic value; and one or two are unique, peculiar to Siena alone.

There is, for example, the *graffiti* pavement of the Cathedral, a series of great designs inlaid with black and white marbles; Sibyls, Allegories, and Scriptural subjects, with the figures fully life-size; a work begun in 1369, which for beauty of line and composition is a model for the black and white Masters of to-day. The greater portion of the Cathedral floor is protected by a wooden covering; but enough is left exposed to show the quality of the work; and reproductions of the whole can be had in book-form.

Another unique thing in Siena is the collection of ancient *tavolette* to be seen in the State Archives. *Tavolette* are, in the first place, simply "wooden boards"; but the *tavolette* of Siena mean the boards which were used to cover the biennial records of the City Treasury. About the twelfth or thirteenth century it occurred to one of the heads of the Treasury department that a plain wooden

board was an ugly thing ; and so at the end of his six months of office he got the binding boards of his records painted with his family coat of arms, and some inscriptions. The innovation caught on ; and year after year the boards got more elaborately painted ; sometimes with portraits, and sometimes with representations of important events that occurred during the six months' term. A number of them, such as those painted by Sano di Pietro about 1470, are exquisitely beautiful ; but the whole collection is one of enormous interest, illustrating by written record and painted cover the actual life of these far-off days. Siena's *graffiti* and Siena's *tavolette* are her very own : there is nothing like them in the whole world.

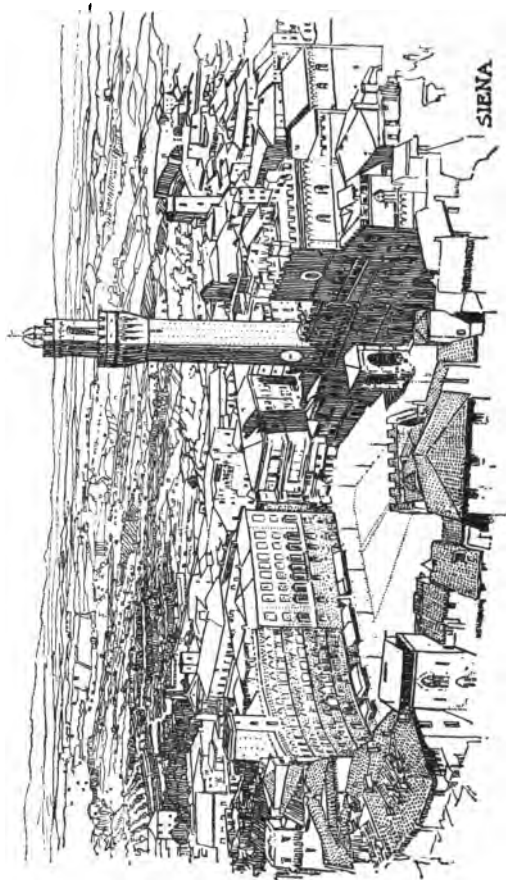
The streets in Siena are narrow, and go straggling gently down to the country ; not quite so suddenly and precipitously as they do in Perugia ; and long before you reach the

Porte or gates, you have the feeling of being out of town. It is not so in the centre of the city, with the houses tumbling against each other everywhere; and the only spaces that may fairly be called "open" are the Piazza of the Duomo, and the astounding (there is no other word for it) *Piazza del Campo*. Dante refers to this great square, and calls it *The Campo*; and long before his day it was the *Campo*, the scene of Siena's many stormy battles and boisterous plays. We were annoyed, but not surprised to find that the Piazza is now officially known by another name; if my memory is not playing me a trick, the name is *Vittorio Emanuele II*. However, the Sienese still call it the *Campo*, and long may they continue so to do. Here takes place twice a year a survival of the old rough sports of the *contrade*, or city wards; happily the fighting days are over. The city is divided into 17 wards; and in July and in

August a furious horse race for the *Palio*, or banner of honour, is run: the *Campo* is the race-course, and youths representing each of the 17 wards are the riders. The fierce clatter round the stone-flagged course must be tremendously exciting: one is tempted to wait on to see it, with the fine processions of the *contrade* in mediæval costume.

In the *Campo*, too, stands the ideal Communal Palace for a city; and from the Palace springs the *Torre del Mangia*, the loveliest tower ever reared by man. Not rich in ornament, nor splendid in colour like Giotto's tower in Florence, but simply heavenly in form and proportion. W. D. Howells has said the true word for it: "When once you have seen the *Mangia*," he writes, "all other towers, obelisks, and columns are tame and vulgar and earth-rooted; that seems to quit the ground, to be not a monument, but a flight."

The Cathedral as it is, and as it might have



been, tells of Siena being no mean city ; the façade decoration is overdone, and has not the repose of the one in Florence ; but the interior is as fine as any in Rome, and immeasurably greater than the best in Florence. The library of the Cathedral, with its grand show of illuminated missals, its heavily bound books, the decorated roof, and the ten great frescoes by Pinturiccho, depicting "the life of the Holy Memory of Pope Pius," made, as a whole, a profounder impression upon me than did the Sistine Chapel at Rome : rank heresy this may be, but I shall not recant.

There is another visitor, like ourselves for one week only, who is creating more stir in Siena than we do. From a few of the surrounding villages it is the custom once a year for the people to bring into the Cathedral their church's image of the Madonna and child. We are seeing the Madonna from Montamiato

having her annual week of honour and glory. She has been carried many miles on the shoulders of devoted worshippers, and is now enthroned before Siena's high altar, and is holding receptions every day of the week. It is strange and pathetic to witness the homage paid to her by the country folk: mothers bringing their sick and lame children, to be held up by the priest before her. Articles of all kinds, from a rosary to an orange, were received by an attendant, waved before the image, and promptly returned to their owners in the most perfunctory and business-like manner. On the Sunday afternoon there was a grand procession in her honour. It was headed by a brass band, and all the city *contrade* followed in their mediæval garb carrying the varied village banners. Then came men from the villages with gowns of different colours covering their work-a-day clothing, and bearing candles, lamps and crosses, and other church

emblems. The clergy and the enthroned Madonna herself came last; passed round the square; and back into the Cathedral. The Government has recently prohibited church processions in the *Campo*; the priests are being severely and literally kept in their own place. In this case, I was distinctly "agin" the Government; for the *Campo* is the best place in the world for a procession; and the Sienese have a natural genius for this kind of pictorial display. In the small and crowded Cathedral Piazza the show was a comparative failure; the brilliant mediæval tights of the *contrade* might as well have been loose-fitting knickerbockers, — nobody could see them.

We drove one afternoon beyond the city walls to the monastery of Osservanza, where there is a large and very fine altar-piece by Andrea della Robbia. We are a trifle crazy about *della Robbias*; a copy of one of his

Florentine *bambinos* keeps watch and ward over my books at home ; and we are always willing to go out of our way to see the great originals. The old country road was perfect for driving, not so wide, but as good a surface on it as you will find between East Kilbride and Glasgow ; and there are not many roads that can equal that famous milk-cart track. We heard the cuckoo cry, and picked wild tulips in a corn-field, growing there as the poppy does with us at home.

The call of that cuckoo has been irresistible : we mean, if we can, to steal a match on that bird, and be on the home moor and golf course before it. Ah ! it pays to leave one's country, if only to get back the joy of returning. Breathes there a dissenter to this assertion ? Go mark him well ; and take stout cow-hide with you for the business.

We are going home ! I know it, for I find myself breaking out into sacred and secular

song in the mornings. While lathering myself with soap the welkin rings with

“ I nightly pitch my moving tent,”

and the razors are appropriately set, with spasmodic intervals, to the air of

“ Scots wha hae wi’ Wallace bled.”

At breakfast time we begin to crack up “Caledonia, stern and wild,” and to revile “soft Siena,” and the meagre morning rations of plain bread and butter. It is too much to expect anyone to do four or five hours of churches and picture galleries on the top of that so-called meal. We have grinned and borne it for over six months now, but we are not going to stand it longer. The work of Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, known to fame as *Sodoma*, is admirable; he is Siena’s own, and once or twice has run a dead heat with Raphael; but what I long to see this morning, I remarked to my wife, is a good fin’an haddie. She agreed with me; and added that since

leaving home we had never seen a dish of ham and eggs ; and not even sausages.

“ Not even sausages ! ” said I, “ then my dear, it is high time that we move on to Bologna ”— which we did.



BOLOGNA

XXXI

MILAN, *April* 1907.

ON the day we left Siena for Bologna, driving to the railway station we were admiring the fine old stone flags of the streets, and lamenting that they would soon be torn up for the laying of tramway rails, when lo, we

met the first car entering the city ! The Sienese have done a cunning thing : the cars are driven by the electric overhead wire system, but no lines have been laid on the streets, or country roads outside the city. The car wheels have solid rubber tyres ; the car itself is of the motor-'bus type, and runs over the flagged streets and hard roads just as it finds them. The trolley wheel which connects with the overhead wire is extra deeply grooved, and the cars can swerve to considerable distances from the centre of the track, and so make way in the narrow streets.

On the way to Bologna we passed by the beloved Florence, and fain would have stopped there again ; but we were going home. We were delayed a little at Pistoia, held up, I should say, for this town should be dear to the Dick Turpin fraternity. At Pistoia they still make guns, and it was there that pistols were invented and named after the town. From

Pistoia the train began the ascent of the Apennines, and by countless tunnels and viaducts raised us gradually 2000 feet above sea level to a point from which we could see towering above us still, the peaks of mountains three times that height; and then we slid quickly down to the great plain in the province of the Emilia and to its capital city of Bologna.

Bologna with its arcaded side walks recalled Turin a little; but wide and straight are the ways of Turin, whereas in Bologna they are usually narrow and tortuous. At the station on our arrival the omnibus of the *Hotel Pellegrino* reminded us that we were pilgrims returning, so we selected that house for our three days' sojourn. Under this Pilgrim roof Lord Byron lodged a hundred years ago; possibly we occupied the identical room that he did. I did not inquire for exact information, which might have deprived me of this agreeable

possibility. The hotel, according to the guide-books, is of the second class ; but we found it a *hot soup* hotel, and comfortable. The crucial test of the quality of any hotel lies in the first table-spoonful of soup. If you are served with an overflowing plateful of lukewarm liquid, you are certain to find a dirty bedroom, hard pillows, and probably damp sheets ; but half-a-plateful of good piping hot soup is the sure indication of springy mattresses, drawers newly lined with spotless paper, and cleanliness in every corner ; Rowley's *hot soup* test has never been known to fail.

I am afraid we did not give to Bologna's churches, palaces, and pictures, the attention they deserve : we were going home ! We saw *San. Petronio*, a church that was designed to be the biggest church in the world, greater even than St. Peter's in Rome, but only the nave was completed, which still leaves it the largest church in Bologna, 384 feet long. We

got wandered in *Santo Stefano*, which is the churchiest corner of the globe. It consists of eight different edifices congregated together ; there are seven distinct churches and a cloistered court. The devout may say their prayers all day long there, doing a round of the numerous altars. We saw the famous picture gallery and its principal glory, Raphael's *St. Cecilia* ; and the rooms devoted to Francia, Guido Reni, the Carraccis, and the other masters of the Bolognese school. We also saw with interest the canvases of the women painters of Bologna ; the work of Elizabeth Sirani, perhaps the greatest Mistress in this school of painters, holding its own beside the masterpieces of her brother artists. In culture and scholarship, as well as in art, the women of Bologna have done wonderful things. Novella d'Andrea, a lady of great beauty, was a professor in the University in the fourteenth century, and is said to have been concealed behind a curtain during

her lectures; and at a later period, in the eighteenth century, Laura Bassi held the chair of Mathematics and Physical Science, and Madame Mazzolini the chair of Anatomy; and more recently still, Clotilda Tambroni, the chair of Greek. It is a strange reflection upon the march of civilisation and progress to contrast these women of Bologna with the Paris lady cab-drivers of to-day, and the fair but furious London suffragette being held tight by policemen.

There are many other worthy sights in and round about Bologna for the diligent, hard-working tourist to see, but we preferred to do some simple shop-gazing, and let wonders present themselves if they pleased. We stood in open-mouthed amazement before the gigantic native sausage; if Bologna failed to build the biggest church in the world, she has certainly scored in one other direction. We found ourselves looking up at the *Torre Asinelli*, and

the *Torre Garisenda*, noticing their sad deflections from uprightness; one to the extent of four feet, and the other as much as eight feet from the perpendicular. Our minds were neither improved nor impressed by these things: I fear we drifted to frivolity, and to the composition of things which everyone ought to know: "Bologna's sausages are fat," we said, "and its towers lean." It was indeed time we were going home.

So on the morning after the third day, we scurried off to Milan to find it soaking wet there, and so home-like. It is a prosperous city with all the unlovely marks of prosperity. Here we began to say our farewells to romantic Italy, and to breathe again the atmosphere of Manchester and of Glasgow. We walked in the great arcade which dwarfs the *Argyle*, and the *Burlington*, and every other arcade in the world. We saw the vast Cathedral, so restless without, and so stately within; and at last, far

away from the centres of business we found the spirit of old Milan in the church of St. Ambrose; and in the faded heart-breaking *Last Supper* of Leonardo da Vinci.

The present church of *Sant' Ambrogio* was built in the year 871 on the site of one founded by St. Ambrose in the fourth century. Its high altar is reputed to be the grandest in Italy; the work of a ninth century goldsmith who, upon plates of silver, engraved the story of the Saint's career, and upon plates of pure gold, the life of our Lord. Milan's proudest boast, however, is to have her name so closely associated with the life and work of Leonardo. It is his spirit that to-day throws a glamour over the city and redeems it from utter commercialism. Italy has her Raphael, and her Michael Angelo, and Leonardo da Vinci—above all others, these three—and the greatest of these is Leonardo. So agree all juries who are qualified to judge.

Within easy reach of Milan stands the

monastery of monasteries—the *Certosa* of Pavia. I have a liking for monasteries; they charm me more than the palace or the cathedral. Their special attraction lies in the homely dwellings of the monks, the gardens and cloisters, and the common rooms, and libraries. As I linger in these calm retreats, I am almost persuaded to become a *Carthusian*. The only stumbling-blocks are a helpless incapacity to believe in monastic miracles, and a growing disinclination to be separated from my wife. A little more freedom on these two points of rule would be sincerely welcomed.

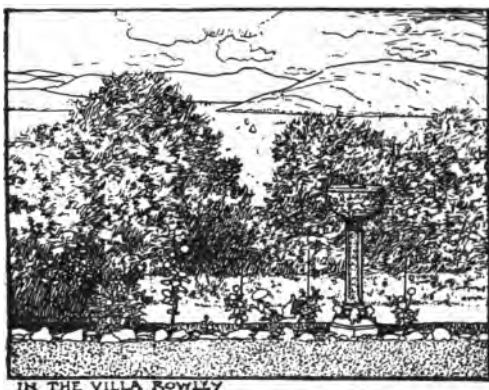
The most alluring of these monastic temptations—in the old days—must certainly have been the *Certosa* of Pavia. If you are ever near Milan, and fail to visit it, you will make the great mistake of your travelling life. We felt, after seeing it, that Italy had been keeping her best wine to the last. It is not beautiful for situation, as so many of the Italian monasteries

are, but in itself, it is like a dream of the *Arabian Nights*. Its erection was begun in 1396 by Giovanni of the great Galleazzo family, Rulers of Milan; but it took Giovanni's successors more than a hundred years to complete it. The monks are all gone, and it is now a government show-place; admission one franc, guide imperative, and no gratuities—a bit of gratuitous humour on the part of the head officials. For two hours we followed a guide who showed us hurriedly a tithe of what remains to be seen; some day we hope to return to it. We saw the great façade of the church, acknowledged to be the finest of its period, and suggesting a gigantic carving in old ivory. We were marched through the church and its twelve side chapels, brilliant with mosaics and paintings, bronze and iron-work, marbles and precious stones. We were shown the library, the museum, and the refectory; and were then led outside to the small cloisters with the fountain,

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and to the great cloisters, round which are built the cells of the monks. There are twenty-four of them ; cells of three apartments, with a small garden behind. What baron or squire, or knight of the shire lived half so well as one of these *Carthusians* of Pavia ! When the show was over we filed before our spotless guide, and I am afraid most of us defiled him. He stood near the notice-board : " Admission one franc : no gratuities ;" but in the corner of his eye I read the plainest possible intimation : " Dis-mission, one franc."

The "good wine" was worth far more than the two francs ; and we left the *Certosa* of Pavia with " ITALY " writ larger than ever upon our hearts and minds.



IN THE VILLA ROWLEY

XXXII

FIRTH OF CLYDE, *April* 1907.

WE said good-bye to Milan, and to Italy ;
and faced the long railway ride to
Paris. It is a tiresome business on the whole ;
but the first quarter in sunshine was something
to dream about in the long hours of the night.
We have seen many lovely spots from the
window of a railway carriage, but surely none
more ravishing than the one on the border of

Lake Maggiore, near Stresa and Palanza, at this time of year, when the peach, and the cherry, and the almond are in bloom. "*Kennst du das Land?*" The vision of that land brought back to me a drawing of Miss Greenaway's, and a song by Madame Chaminade. In the mind's eye, I saw the *Kate Greenaway* country, the happy land to which the pied Piper charmed the children of Hamelin; and in the mind's ear, keeping time to the throb of the axle-trees, I listened to Chaminade's melody:

"'Twas in a land, radiant with love,
Flooded with light."

From that sweet and pleasant country we rushed into the dark shadow of the Simplon, where the gloom is partly relieved by table d'hôte dinner. From the long tunnel we passed into the darkness of night and decided to go to sleep: on and on we went, but never arrived at slumber-town. We did not much mind; we were going home. We persevered

marking time to the axle-trees, and dreamt of our own native land, radiant with love sure enough, but flooded, too seldom with light, too often with rain. And so to Paris in the early morning.

At Paris, we were still in the homeward-returning fever; and the welcomes of our old friends of the Quarter made us feel that we had almost arrived. We lived light in the spring, spending our days in the greening Bois, and Boulevards; and our evenings in the dear Latin Quarter. Here a miracle happened; my ears seemed to be suddenly opened, and I could understand and follow the chatter of Jules and Alphonse as I never had done before. The three months of ear-practice with the sounds of unfamiliar Italian had been serviceable training for the comprehension of the more familiar French, on hearing it again in Paris. The ear had come under subjection, and was now my obedient servant. The tongue, alas, remains

the same old unruly member. Every time I open my mouth and give him a little rope, he runs amuck with gender and case and puts me to shame. Lord Kelvin has a theory—the only way to acquire a language, he says, is to begin to do so at six years of age. The tongue no man can tame, but children may. I am convinced Lord Kelvin is right.

There was a recitation once popular in the halls of Suburbia, entitled, *A Frenchman's Difficulties with the English Language*. I have laughed heartily over it myself. It is now dawning upon me that if a smart Parisian were to draw me out, what a screamingly funny piece he could make of a Scotsman's difficulties with the French language. Probably Jules and Alphonse have already this *jeu d'esprit* in their repertoire, but to spare the foreigner's feelings they reserve its production for the privacy of the atelier.

At last we had to say all our good-byes—

to Thérèse and Hedwige, to Jules and Alphonse, to the French tongue, and to the Venus of Milo. We crossed the raging main, enraged and cross with it; we landed on British soil, and gave thanks—there was no more to give. The home-hunger appeared to increase as we ran from the rough sea, O so smoothly, through Sussex and Surrey; but as soon as we came to London town, we began to feel as if we had just come down from the north with a week-end ticket.

Have we really been away? We are most certainly at home now, and firmly fixed in the old routine. Jamieson was the man who most effectually called us there. Jamieson is a far-off neighbour of mine; he is something in the timber trade—and looks it. He came hurrying up behind me yesterday, while I slowed off for him, considering, the while, what might interest him most among all our adventures. I decided that an account of the Piacenza bridge-of-boats

affair would be in his line and would be sure to fetch him.

"You've got home again, Rowley," he began heartily.

"Yes," I said, "and very glad to be home."

"Had a good time?"

"Yes, a very good time."

Now was my opportunity; but Jamieson cut in: "Isn't it shameful, Rowley, this proposal to shift the lamp-posts in our crescent? It will mean lifting the one opposite my garden gate and putting our path in darkness. We must rouse up the ward committee to look into this; they take no interest in things and are a stupid dead-and-alive lot."

And so we thrashed out the pros and cons of this all-engrossing topic until he parted from me; and then I realised that we were safely home again, to the trivial round and common task.



EACH MAN'S CHIMNEY IS HIS GOLDEN MILESTONE ;
IS THE CENTRAL POINT FROM WHICH HE MEASURES
EVERY DISTANCE
THROUGH THE GATEWAYS OF THE WORLD AROUND
HIM.

Longfellow.

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LETTERS
FROM
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